

Violent Victimization in the United States: Major Issues and Trends

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I. Introduction

A. Overview of Criminal Victimization

Criminal victimization is common in the United States. Crime and punishment have been prominent features of the American landscape since colonial times (Friedman, 1993). In the 1960s, office holders at all levels of government started embracing crime as a major social and political issue and waging campaigns promising to enhance public safety (Warr, 2000). During years of escalating crime, more policing and harsher punishments were implemented to reduce criminal victimization. These efforts were undertaken largely on the basis of political ideology and with little consideration for their immediate impact or long-term consequences (Laub, 1997). The specific effects of such crime control policies on victimization have been difficult to measure, especially on a large scale.

Crime fascinates and frightens Americans, whose understandings of crime, violence and punishment are fraught with misperceptions that stem more from dramatizations and media accounts than actual crime data and criminal justice system operations (Warr, 2000). Each year, tens of millions of Americans become victims of violent, property or other types of crimes (Herman & Waul, 2004). Nonetheless, relatively little is known about the fluctuating nature of criminal victimization (Lauritsen, 2009).

In terms of its financial and emotional toll, crime is quite costly (Skogan, Lurigio, & Davis, 1990). At some point, crime will likely touch the lives of most residents of the country through direct (i.e., personal experience) or indirect (i.e., experiences of family members, friends, neighbors or acquaintances) victimization—or both (Riggs & Kilpatrick, 1990). Everyday reminders of the rampancy of crime are inescapable and can lead to vicarious victimization (Cook & Fox, 2011). Blanket news coverage of crime on network, cable, and

Internet-based news programs and blogs, as well as ubiquitous crime reality shows and documentaries, bombard Americans with images and narratives about crime, particularly events involving violent incidents and multiple victims, which are far more anxiety-provoking and less common than non-violent, single-victim incidents (Robinson, 2011). Media coverage inflates public estimates of criminal victimization and fuels fear of crime (Ferraro, 1995; Warr, 2002), which in turn can diminish the quality of people's lives (Skogan, Lurigio, & Davis, 1990). These portrayals of crime obscure the uneven risk of criminal victimization, which varies by social class, race, residence and a host of other factors (Lauritsen, 2009).

The number and type of crimes reported to the police and to interviewers in victimization surveys wax and wane for reasons that baffle criminologists and other experts; however, changes in crime rates are presumably correlated with changes in the economy, illegal drug markets, crime control strategies and the shape of the age distribution. Specifically, the emergence of a recession, the introduction of a new illicit drug sold by rival street gangs and the presence of a large proportion of the population between the ages of 16 and 25 are all believed to signal an inevitable crime wave (Blumstein & Wallman, 2000). In contrast, more police on the streets, the adoption of public-order policing tactics, the subsiding of the so-called "crack epidemic," and the burgeoning of the prison population have all been purported to contribute to the steady decline in crime (Johnson & Raphael, 2012; Levitt, 2004). However, these changes never fully (or even mostly) account for why crimes are committed or who will become a crime victim. The only constants in the ever-fluctuating criminal victimization rates are the over-representation among victims and offenders of youth, minorities and the most impoverished residents of urban areas (Laub, 1997; Walker, Spohn, & Delone, 2012).

B. National Crime Trends

National crime rates steadily declined from the mid-1980s to the mid-90s and continued to decline into the first decade of the 21st century. For example, throughout this period, homicide rates—a barometer that public officials and the general public use to gauge the overall safety of their communities—dropped to a 25-year low in 1996 (Blumstein & Wallman, 2000) and then to a 60-year low in 2010 (Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 2011). From 1991 to 2004, the violent crime rate fell nearly 40 percent, from 758 per 100,000 persons to 463 per 100,000 persons (FBI, 2006). Consequently, by 2004, the violent crime rate was roughly the same as it was in 1970 and the murder rate had fallen to its lowest level since 1965 (Bureau of Justice Statistics [BJS], 2006a).

Between 1993 and 2005, violent crime rates decreased by 58 percent (Catalano, 2006). Steep declines in the violent crime rate appeared even during the crime-ridden 1980s when, in 1986, the overall level of crime dropped to its lowest level since the launching of the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) in the early 1970s (see below) (Laub, 1990). However, the safety dividends of the crime reduction era have been unequally dispersed. Low-income minority communities continue to experience high absolute rates of crime, especially violent victimizations (Kearney, Harris, Jacome, & Parker, 2014).

The fairly steady reductions in crime over the past 15 to 20 years should be welcome news to Americans. Nevertheless, the volume of violent crimes committed annually in the United States is still staggeringly high compared with the volume in other industrialized nations (Farrington, Langan, & Tonry, 2004), and fear of crime is still pervasive in this country, as previously noted (Warr, 2000). Indeed, although overall criminal victimization rates generally fell from 2005 to 2012, in each of those years, 66 percent or more of Americans perceived that

crime had increased from the previous year (Saad, 2013). Whatever its causes—and despite recent drops in crime—criminal victimization continues to transform people’s lives, leaving an excess of human misery in its wake that affects not only the victims themselves but also their loved ones, friends and neighbors (Herman & Waul, 2004; Riggs & Kilpatrick, 1990).

C. Current Paper

This paper examines violent criminal victimization in the United States, including its measurement, prevalence, and costs. The focus is on aggregate assessments of the pervasiveness and costliness of violent crime in this country. Also discussed are various strategies for enhancing and expanding those assessments and various legislative and programming initiatives designed to help victims recover from the trauma of violence, which can be life-long and life-altering. While the observations and conclusions of this paper are based overwhelmingly on data, one section explores controversial theories of violent victimization, some of which feature the victim’s role in precipitating or participating in the attack. Even with concern from victim advocates and service providers regarding the perniciousness of “victim blaming,” these theories have been propounded for more than a half century in the field of victimology and have attempted to explicate the often dynamic and complicated nature of violent incidents. Notwithstanding their heuristic value, some of these theories have been difficult to test and therefore have generated limited empirical support.

The paper falls into six major sections. Following this initial section (Section I), which presents an overview of criminal victimization and crime trends, Section II describes the measurement of violent crime, focusing mostly on the two largest and longest-standing national repositories of data on reported and unreported crime and victimization: the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) and the NCVS . Section III presents trends in violent victimization. Crime data

from the UCR and the NCVS on the most serious violent crimes (i.e., homicide, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) are presented. Section IV features an overview of the costs of violent victimization in financial and psychological terms. Section V enumerates the demographic characteristics correlated with violent victimization as well as controversial criminological theories on how victims' lifestyles and behaviors might partially contribute to the risk of violent victimization. Section VI traces the victim's rights movement and discusses the evolution and growth of crime victim services. Section VII recommends improvements in the measurement of victimization trends and textures, suggesting directions for future victimization research in order to more precisely capture the nature, extent, and consequences of violent victimization.

II. Measuring Crime in the United States

As noted above, crime in the United States is measured and reported through two primary mechanisms: the UCR and the NCVS (Planty, Langton, & Barnett-Ryan, 2014). These are the nation's largest, best-known, and most widely cited criminal justice sources of violent victimizations in the United States. However, other sources of data on violent victimizations can be found in other databases that lie in the public health arena. For example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) describes and monitors incidents of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and stalking, involving men and women.

In a random digit dialing telephone survey covering all 50 states, the NISVS focuses on victimizations that are usually missing from other nationally representative surveys, such as psychological aggression and coercive control over life choices as well as sexual and reproductive health (CDC, 2014a). Another CDC data collection tool that records information on

violent victimization is the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) (CDC, 2014b). Operating in 32 states, the system is designed to answer questions about the “who, when, where and how” of violent deaths in order to answer the question of “why.” In 2010, the NVDRS added a module on intimate partner violence (CDC, 2014b).

A. Uniform Crime Report (Part I Violent Index Crimes)

1. Description of UCR. The International Association of Chiefs of Police created the UCR in 1929 in order to establish a standard and reliable methodology for collecting and communicating crime data throughout the country (Chilton, 2010). The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) assumed responsibility for the UCR in 1930. “Police administrators from around the country were very supportive of [the UCR]. They felt that such knowledge could help identify the magnitude of the crime problem, map changes over time, and guide actions to combat the criminal element” (Doerner & Lab, 2015, p. 27).

The UCR gathers and synthesizes information on crimes reported to or discovered by the police—that is, “offenses known to the police” (FBI, 2011). Local police department administrators compile these data in monthly reports and voluntarily submit them to the FBI for analyses and dissemination. The UCR database contains information from 17,500 police agencies located in jurisdictions that encompass 95% or more of the American population. Basic information in the UCR database includes the number of people arrested, characteristics of arrestees (e.g., gender, race, age), the number of crimes known to the police through victim or witness reports or police activity and investigation, and the number of law enforcement officers in a jurisdiction (Gaines & Miller, 2014).

In its traditional Summary Reporting System (SRS), the UCR concentrates on eight major “street” or “predatory” (Cohen & Felson, 1979) crimes, also known as Part I Index crimes.

These include violent crimes such as homicide (murder), forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault as well as property crimes such as burglary (breaking or entering), theft (larceny), motor vehicle theft, and arson. The FBI's definitions of violent Part I Index crimes are presented below. Data on each of these serious offenses are typically reported as a rate per 100,000 residents, which is calculated by dividing the number of offenses by a jurisdiction's current population and then multiplying by the standard population size; and as a percentage change from the preceding year or other periods of time, which is calculated by subtracting the previous number of crimes per year from the current number of crimes per year and dividing the difference by the previous number of crimes per year.

Part II Index crimes are considered less serious offenses and consist of offenses such as forgery, vandalism, prostitution and commercialized vice, and gambling. In its annual report, *Crime in the United States*, the UCR presents crime data for the entire nation (Planty, Langton, & Barnett-Ryan, 2014). Researchers and expert analysts can disaggregate this information by regions of the country, states, counties, cities (towns), and American Indian reservations (FBI, 2014). In 2004, the UCR stopped publishing separate data on the aggregate crime index because the overwhelming numbers of theft cases, which outnumbered more serious but less prevalent violent crimes, obscured the meaningfulness of these data. The report now separates the violent crime total from the property crime total (James & Council, 2008).

Definitions of Part I Index Crimes (FBI 2010)

Murder and Non-negligent Manslaughter: The willful (non-negligent) killing of one human being by another. The definition excludes deaths caused by negligence, attempts and assaults to kill, suicides, and accidental death.

Forcible Rape: The carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Excluded are statutory offenses that involve a victim under the age of consent and incidents without force. In

December 2011, the SRS changed its definition of rape to “penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.” This definitional change was instituted in December 2013.

Robbery: The taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear.

Aggravated Assault: The unlawful attack by a person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. Aggravated assault is generally accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means that can result in death or by means likely to result in death and great bodily harm. Simple assaults (not involving a weapon or resulting in bodily harm) are excluded from this category.

2. Limitations of the UCR. A major limitation of the UCR is that it gathers only “official” crime data, consisting of offenses that come to the attention of police officials and are recorded in police departments’ records; unreported crimes are not included, thereby underestimating the number of crimes and the number of offenders (Gaines & Miller, 2014). The UCR is a voluntary reporting system. As previously stated, not all jurisdictions report data to the UCR; therefore, it is limited in its coverage as a crime reporting system. For example, in 2006, law enforcement agencies reporting to the UCR were located in jurisdictions that represented only 94% of the American population, thus excluding 18 million people from the UCR database (FBI, 2007).

Another limitation of the UCR is that victims fail to report crimes for a variety of reasons, including beliefs that the incident was a private matter or that the police can do nothing about it as well as fear of retaliation from the offender or a desire to protect the offender (Hart & Rennison, 2003). For homicide cases, the UCR collects only details about the victim and offenders (see below) and excludes information about weapons from forcible rape cases, which are also reported for female victims only. Furthermore, the UCR’s hierarchy rule counts only the most serious crime in a multiple-crime incident. For example, if a home is burglarized and the

homeowner is raped during the incident, only the forcible rape would be recorded. This systematic undercounting biases the crime data downward and makes the UCR data incomparable with international crime recording systems, which count all crimes in a multiple crime episode (Gaines & Miller, 2014).

More egregious is evidence of purposeful downgrading of crime, such as the Atlanta Police Department's withholding from the UCR of more than 20,000 police reports in an effort to attract the 1996 Olympic Games and boost city tourism (Walker & Katz, 2002). Less pernicious but decidedly more rampant is the routine underreporting of crimes by police officers who, for example, are less likely to file a report if no suspect was present in the incident or identified in a citizen complaint (Walker & Katz, 2005; see Black, 1970, for the seminal study of police discretion and underreporting of crime). Accordingly, UCR data mostly reflect the results of policing strategies and deployments, not offender behavior (criminal activity); the experiences or actions of crime victims before, during, or after the incident are never included in standard UCR statistics (Regoli & Hewitt, 2008). Moreover, law enforcement agencies often report annual data that fall short of the full 12 months (Barnett-Ryan, 2007; Mosher et al., 2002)

3. National Incident-Based Reporting System. In the 1970s, in an effort to overcome some of the shortcomings of the UCR, the FBI established the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which records information on all the crimes committed in an incident (not only the most serious crime [the hierarchy rule]) and provides more texture to crime reports by including data on offenders, victims, and places (Regoli & Hewitt, 2008). Expected to eventually replace the UCR, NIBRS collects detailed data on each crime that becomes known to the police. These data include information regarding the incident, the victim, and the characteristics of arrestees, which constitute 53 separate crime elements for offenses in 22

categories and two groups (A and B), providing police agencies with the data needed to adduce more numbers-driven arguments for greater resources and personnel (FBI, 1999).

Analogous to the UCR, NIBRS reports crimes against persons and crimes against property; NIBRS also reports attempted and completed offenses as well as offenses in a third category known as “crimes against society.” Group A offenses include crimes such as arson, assault, embezzlement, gambling, homicide, prostitution, and robbery. Group B offenses contain information on arrests only and include crimes such as disorderly conduct, liquor law violations, and check fraud. NIBRS submits data on each separate crime incident to the FBI and separately tallies the number of Part I and Part II Index crimes for jurisdictional reporting purposes (James & Council, 2008).

In addition to collecting and reporting data on a greater variety of crimes with a greater level of detail, NIBRS offers other advantages over the UCR, including the capacity to link specific incidents to offenses and to distinguish between attempted and completed crimes (James & Council, 2008), allowing “researchers to gain a more in-depth picture of the crime problem and to use that information to decide on appropriate courses of action” (Doerner & Lab, 2015, p. 29). Notwithstanding its strengths as a data collection and reporting tool, NIBRS is labor-intensive (i.e., the system contains strenuous data entry and processing requirements) and has been implemented in jurisdictions that cover only 17% of the American population (James & Council, 2008).

4. Supplemental Homicide Reports. Available from the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, the most detailed information on homicide is contained in the FBI’s Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR), which gather and report various data: age, gender, and race of murder victims and offenders; types of weapons used in the incident; and the relationship between

victims and offenders (Cooper & Smith, 2011; James & Council, 2008). The SHR data illuminate several interesting trends regarding homicide incidents, perpetrators, and victims. The BJS' Patterns and Trends series presents these trends, covering a three-decade period from 1980 to 2008 (Cooper & Smith, 2011).

Regardless of its shortcomings, the UCR provides useful data for establishing national crime trends as well as informing crime control policies and the deployment of law enforcement resources (Fagin, 2011). Indeed, the UCR was the first—and most enduring—attempt to establish a national, standardized measure of the incidence of crime in the United States and continues to be the best-promulgated and most highly referenced source of information on crime in the country (James & Council, 2008). “UCR data are now used extensively by academics and government officials for research, policy, and planning purposes, and the data are widely cited in the media” (James & Council, 2008, p. 2).

B. National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)

1. Description of NCVS. Administered by BJS and conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, the NCVS was designed to illuminate the “dark figure” of crime; namely, offenses that never come to the attention of the police (Planty, Langton, & Barnett-Ryan, 2014). The first generation of the NCVS was conducted by the National Opinion Research Center and showed that the victimization rate found in the survey was more than two times higher than the rate reported in the UCR (Ennis, 1967). The current NCVS is the fourth generation of the survey and contains several revisions to improve its administration and accuracy (Doerner & Lab, 2015). As opposed to the UCR's second-hand police report filings on crime incidents, the NCVS asks respondents specific questions about the crimes, such as the following: Was the crime reported to

the police? Was the offense completed or just attempted? Was a weapon used in the crime? Did the victim resist? (James & Council, 2008).

According to the NCVS, more than half (52%) of all violent victimizations—or an annual average of 3,382,200 violent victimizations—were never reported to the police during the period from 2006 to 2010. The most common reason for non-reporting (34%) was that the victim dealt with the crime by reporting it to another official (e.g., a guard, manager, school official). Almost 1 in 5 unreported violent victimizations (18%) were unreported because the victim believed the crime was not important enough to notify law enforcement authorities. Other reasons included the belief that the police would not or could not help with the matter and the fear of offender reprisal. Unreported crimes have negative consequences. For example, victims might be deprived of necessary services to cope with the victimization. When violent crimes are unreported, perpetrators are unpunished, and law enforcement and community resources are misallocated due to the absence of timely and accurate crime information at the local level (Langton, Berzofsky, Krebs, & Smiley-McDonald, 2012).

2. NCVS Methodology. Each year, approximately 90,000 household and 160,000 individual NCVS interviews are conducted with persons age 12 or older to gather detailed information about reported and unreported crimes as well as data on victims (e.g., age, gender, race), offenders (e.g., age, the offender's relationship to the victim), and the crime incident itself (e.g., weapons used, location of the offense, economic costs and physical injuries caused by the victimization). "The NCVS provides the largest national forum for victims to describe the impact of crime and characteristics of violent offenders" (Barnett-Ryan, Langton, & Planty, 2014, p. 1) as well as "nationally representative information on the frequency, characteristics, and consequences of non-lethal violence and property crime against persons and households"

(Lauritsen, 2009, p. 68). Other specific benefits of the NCVS are its usefulness in understanding why victims fail to report crimes to the police and the variations in crime reporting attributable to crime and victim characteristics. The NCVS also sheds light on the interactions and relationships between victims and offenders as well as differences over time and among population types (e.g., rural, suburban, urban) (James & Council, 2008; Wells & Rankin, 1995).

Beginning in 1989, a new NCVS methodology was systematically field-tested. Annual results from the redesigned survey were first published in 1993 (BJS, 1994). New survey questions were added in response to heightened interest in certain types of victimizations, such as domestic violence, victimizations against people with disabilities, hate crime, and identity theft (James & Council, 2008). Improvements in technology and survey methods were also incorporated in the redesign of the NCVS, including more precise screening questions and cues that stimulate the recall of victimization incidents and the adoption of computer-assisted telephone interviewing \ techniques. In addition, NCVS interviewers now ask more direct and explicit questions about sexual victimization (Rennison & Rand, 2007).

3. Limitations of NCVS. The NCVS asks questions about Part I Index crimes (except arson and homicide) but it measures no crimes against businesses (i.e., commercial crimes) or victimless crimes, such as drug crimes, prostitution, and gambling. The NCVS relies on a national sample of households and is therefore subject to sampling error and must present findings based on confidence interval estimates. Therefore, the true values of the data reported are never known. Nonsampling errors stem from respondents' limited or faulty memories (i.e., memory decay) and telescoping (i.e., recalling events that transpired outside the survey period) as well as interviewer mistakes in the asking or wording of questions. Respondents also might be fearful of reporting a crime due to the possibility of offender retaliation, or they might never

have defined an incident as a criminal victimization. Furthermore, when using the “household” as the unit of analysis, if the members of such change from one wave to the next, the bounding of the initial interview’s point of reference for subsequent questions is no longer useful and can result in inflated victimization rates (James & Council, 2008).

Despite its limitations, the NCVS is an invaluable source of information about the nature, prevalence, and trends regarding violent victimization among individuals and households. The survey is an indispensable complement to the UCR (see below). To improve the accuracy, breadth, and usefulness of the NCVS, BJS commissioned in 2010 the National Research Council of the National Academies to review the survey’s methodology and to establish guidelines for redesigning the survey. This advisory panel consisted of experts from the fields of criminal justice policy, research and survey methodology, victim advocacy, and statistics. These experts oversaw a consortium of criminologists, social scientists, and survey experts, who conducted research on designing and improving NCVS protocols and procedures (National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, 2014).

Based on the recommendations of the panel, BJS has initiated projects to identify, develop, and test various methods for improving the collection of self-reported data on rape and sexual assault. Specifically, “other” victimizations, such as non-rape sexual assault and unwanted or coerced sexual contact that involves a threat or attempt to harm, are also being measured. “Ultimately it is the goal of BJS to redesign the NCVS to improve its methodology, assure its sustainability, increase its value to national and local stakeholders, and better meet the challenges of measuring the extent, characteristics, and consequences of criminal victimization” (BJS, 2014).

C. Comparing the UCR and the NCVS

With regard to overall trends, the findings of the UCR and NCVS are closely matched. For example, both show that property crimes are much more numerous than violent crimes, crime rates are higher in cities than in suburbs, and young men are the most likely victims and perpetrators of violent offenses (see below). Generally, when crime goes up in one data set, it goes up in the other (Rennison & Rand, 2007). The UCR and NCVS are differentially generated sources of data on crime; in juxtaposition, they elucidate critical differences between official records of victimization (UCR) and victimization experiences (NCVS). Together, they provide triangulated measures of the nature, scope, and impact of criminal victimization—each with its own strengths and limitations (James & Council, 2007)—because “crime, unlike the weather, is a phenomenon that is not directly observable. No one measure [the UCR or the NCVS alone] is capable of providing all the information about the extent and characteristics of crime” (Rand & Rennison, 2002, p. 48).

The UCR and NCVS were originally created to serve very different purposes. In designing the UCR, the FBI’s primary goal was to collect and collate crime data (i.e., the number of crimes reported to law enforcement agencies throughout the country) and related statistics (e.g., the number of law enforcement officers) in order to improve the administration, management, and operations of law enforcement agencies (BJS, 2014). The UCR’s Supplementary Homicide Reports provide the most reliable, timely data on several aspects of homicides in the nation. The NCVS was expressly developed to complement the UCR (BJS, 2014). BJS established the NCVS to uncover previously unknown information about victims, offenders, and crimes never reported to the police. Hence, the NCVS is the chief source of information on the characteristics of criminal victimization (BJS, 2014).

The UCR and the NCVS share common elements. For example, the two programs measure the same subset of violent crimes *sans* homicide (i.e., forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault), which are similarly defined. However, although forcible rape is defined analogously in both, the UCR has historically measured these crimes against women only, whereas the NCVS measures it against both genders (James & Council, 2008). As noted above, the UCR has broadened its definition of rape to include a wider range of sexual crime as well as sexual violence against men. Unlike the UCR, the NCVS excludes homicide, arson, commercial crimes, and crimes against children under the age of 12. The UCR captures crimes reported to law enforcement but collects only arrest data for simple assaults and sexual assaults other than forcible rape. The UCR defines burglary as “the unlawful entry or attempted entry of a structure to commit a felony or theft.” The NCVS, however, obviating the need for victims to ascertain offender motives, defines burglary as “the entry or attempted entry [into] a residence by a person who had no right to be there.”

The UCR rates for crimes are largely per-capita measures (number of crimes per 100,000 persons), whereas the NCVS rates for crimes are largely per-household measures (number of crimes per 1,000 households). Since the number of households and the total population might grow at varying annual rates, trend data for rates of household crimes measured by the two programs might diverge. NCVS victimization rates for robbery include only those reported to the police. After removing UCR robberies of commercial establishments (non-households) such as gas stations, convenience stores, and banks from analyses, the results reveal closely corresponding long-term trends for this offense (Rennison & Rand, 2007).

Differences in the NCVS and the UCR data could result from sampling variations and data interpolations, respectively. NCVS data are derived from sample interviews and thus are

subject to a margin of error. BJS uses rigorous statistical methods to calculate confidence intervals around all survey estimates. BJS describes trend data in the NCVS reports as genuine only if there is at least 90% certainty that the measured changes are not the result of sampling variations. The UCR program bases its data on the actual counts of offenses reported by law enforcement agencies. In some circumstances, the UCR program estimates its data to adjust for nonresponse in nonparticipating agencies or those reporting only partial data (James & Council, 2008).

For most types of crimes measured by the UCR and NCVS, those aspects of crime not common to both can be excluded from analyses. The resulting long-term trend lines can then be brought into close concordance. The impact of such adjustments is most striking for robbery, burglary, and motor vehicle theft, whose definitions most closely coincide (Rennison & Rand, 2007). Apparent discrepancies between statistics from the two programs usually can be accounted for by definitional and procedural differences or resolved by comparing NCVS sampling variations (confidence intervals) of those crimes said to have been reported to police with those crimes as revealed in UCR statistics, thereby yielding a supposed direct comparison of ‘reported crime’ to ‘reported crime’ (Rennison & Rand, 2007).

III. Prevalence of Violent Crime

Figure 1 and Table 1 in the Appendix show a mostly steady decrement in both the UCR and NCVS indices of violent crime and victimization during a recent 20-year period (1993–2013). The continued downturn in such incidents has been characterized as one of the most profound and prolonged periods of declining victimization risk in the country’s history (Zimring, 2007). The figure and table also illustrate the overall consistency between the two major data repositories for reported violent crime and victimization in the United States.

A. Violent Crimes: UCR Data

According to the UCR, the violent crime rate (e.g., murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault) has consistently declined for more than 20 years, dropping from a high of 747 per 100,000 residents in 1993 to a low of 387 per 100,000 residents in 2011 and 2012. From 1993 to 2002, the violent crime rate declined 34%; from 2003 to 2012, it declined 19%. In 2012, it was 48% lower than in 1993 (FBI, 2014). In 2012 (when the rate of violent crimes per 100,000 residents was 387), 1,214,462 violent crimes were reported and recorded nationwide. In that same year, aggravated assault was by far the most common violent crime (63%), followed by robbery (29%), forcible rape (7%), and murder (1%). Firearms were used in nearly 70% of the nation's murders, 41% of robberies, and 22% of aggravated assaults (see below) (FBI, 2014).

Between 1980 and 2010, more than 500,000 murders were reported or recorded in the United States—nearly 6 times more than the cumulative and combined totals of American combat-related deaths recorded in the Korean and Vietnam conflicts and the ongoing War on Terror (FBI, 2014). As most homicide victims are young, a significant number of productive years are lost as a consequence of murder. In addition, the surviving loved ones of homicide victims often experience profound and long-lasting emotional trauma (Zinzow, Thomson, & Rheingold, 2013).

The most prominent overall trends are the steady and sometimes marked increases in homicides in the second half of the 20th century and the smooth and mostly steady decreases in homicides in the final decade of the 20th century as well as in the first decade of the current century. For example, beginning in the early 1950s, homicides trended upward, more than doubling from a rate of 4.6 per 100,000 residents in 1962 to 9.7 per 100,000 residents in 1979. The upturn stalled in the early 1980s, only to resume in the late 1980s and early 90s, reaching

peaks in terms of both numbers (23,040) and rates (10.2 per 100,000—the highest rate ever recorded), first in 1980 and again in 1991 (24,703 homicides—the highest number ever recorded—with 9.8 per 100,000). Thus, from 1960 to 1990, the number of homicides more than doubled (157%); however, from 1990 to 2010, the number of homicides fell by nearly 40%.

From 1992 to 2011, the homicide rate declined by nearly half (49%), from 9.3 to 4.7 homicides per 100,000 residents—the lowest rate since 1963 (Smith & Cooper, 2013). More recently, the number of yearly homicides averaged 13,340 from 2008 through 2012 (FBI, 2014). In 2012, a total of 14,827 homicides were reported at a rate of 4.7 per 100,000, which equaled the rate of homicides in 1963—a 17% higher rate than the lowest rate of the previous century (4.0 in 1957) and a 54% lower rate than the highest rate of the previous century (10.2 in 1980). The homicide rate in 2012 increased 0.4%, compared with the rate in 2011, and decreased 13% and 17%, compared with the rates in 2008 and 2003, respectively. Nearly 70% of the homicides committed in 2012 involved a firearm, and more than 70% of those involved a handgun (see below) (FBI, 2014).

B. Guns and Violent Crime

From 1985 to 1993, nearly all of the overall increases in the homicide rate involved gun-related murders; conversely, homicide rates involving other weapons declined during those years (Committee on Law and Justice, 2004). The likelihood of death in a violent altercation significantly increases when either the victim or the attacker has a firearm (Cook & Moore, 1995). For example, the mortality rate for gunshot wounds to the heart is 84%, whereas the morality rate for stab wounds to the heart is 30% (Asensio et al., 1998).

Handguns are lightweight and easy to carry and conceal. They are successful at inflicting mortal wounds that sometimes result in instantaneous death. Handguns are also, by far, the most

avored weapons for committing murders in public places; victim resistance is nearly impossible, the shooting incident lasts seconds, and the offender can be far removed from the scene during and after the shooting incident. Knives, baseball bats, brass knuckles, fists, and feet are not as lethal as guns and take more time to cause damage. Hence, fewer guns overall would probably, but not necessarily, equate to fewer homicides (Lurigio, 2012).

The number of incidents of homicides committed with a firearm in the United States is greater than that in other developed countries. For example, in 2009, the gun-related homicide rate in the United States was 3.0 per 100,000 residents. In comparison, the gun-related homicide rates in the United Kingdom and Germany, where gun control laws are highly stringent, were 0.07 and 0.20 per 100,000 residents—40 and 13 times lower, respectively, than the rate in the United States (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011). However, gun-related homicides in Switzerland are similarly low (i.e., 0.52 per 100,000 residents in 2010), despite the fact that the country has the third-highest number of guns per resident in the world (gunpolicy.org).

In the last 10 years (2004–2013), in the United States, firearm victimizations dropped from 465,510 to 332,950, resulting in a 28% decline. During this period, the number of such victimizations reached its highest point in 2006 (614,410) and its lowest point in 2013 (332,950). From 1992 to 2011, the rate of homicides involving a firearm declined by 49%, whereas the percentage of homicide victims killed by a firearm (67%) remained unchanged during that same period (Smith & Copper, 2013).

The mere presence of a gun in a household increases the risk of gun-related death. A recent study found a high correlation between gun ownership and homicides in the United States; specifically, the homicide rate increases 0.9% for each percentage-point increase in gun

ownership. States with the highest rates of gun ownership also have the highest rates of gun-related homicides (Siegal et al., 2014). Paradoxically, although violent crime rates have been decreasing, handgun purchases for protection have been increasing. For example, the percentage of owners reporting that they purchased guns for protection rose from 26% in 1999 to 49% in 2013 (Pew Research Center, 2013). Proponents of gun ownership have argued that these data present strong evidence for the protective effects of guns on public safety (Lott, 2010).

Guns are also involved in other types of violent victimizations. The use of firearms in assaults, rapes, and robberies contributes to the death rate from interpersonal violence in the United States. Indeed, firearms are a major contributing cause of death and injury in incidents of interpersonal violence. The lethal combination of the ready accessibility of guns and the willingness of people to use them in ill-fated attempts to resolve interpersonal conflicts has consistently fueled the high rates of violent death in the United States (Zimring & Hawkins, 1997).

According to the NCVS, in 2011, nearly 470,000 people were victims of nonfatal crimes that involved a firearm (Planty & Truman, 2013). The number of nonfatal firearm-related victimizations reached its peak in 1994 (1,568,200) and its lowest point in 2008 (371,300). From 1993 to 2011, an average of 25% of robberies and 28% of aggravated assaults were committed with a firearm. For example, in 1994, nearly 30% of victims of robbery, rape, and aggravated assault faced an offender who was armed with a gun (Zawitz, 1994). From 1993 to 2001, an average of 10% of violent victimizations involved a firearm, which was the most common weapon used in nonfatal violent crimes. During this period, firearm violence declined 63% (Perkins, 2003). From 1994 to 2011, handguns were involved in no fewer than 84% (and as

many as 93%) of nonfatal violent victimizations that were committed with a weapon (Planty & Truman, 2013).

Analyses of NCVS data from the late 1980s and early 1990s shows that among those injured in firearm-related victimization incidents, 19% sustained gunshot wounds and 15% sustained serious injuries (Zawitz, 1996). From 2007 to 2011, 23% of firearm victims sustained injuries (46,000 victims were wounded by gunshots). Among those injured, 72% received treatment for their injuries. More than 40% of the incidents of nonfatal firearm violence occurred in or around victims' homes or lodgings; only 1% of the victims of nonfatal firearm violence protected themselves with a firearm during the incident (Planty & Truman, 2013).

C. Violent Crimes: NCVS Data

According to the NCVS, from 1973 to 1994, the violent victimization rate fluctuated, peaking in 1981, falling until the mid-1980s, and then peaking again in 1993 (Rennison, 2002). From 1994 to 2001, the rate fell dramatically (62%), declining from approximately 8,000 to approximately 3,000 per 100,000 persons aged 12 and older. The rate climbed to 3,210 in 2003, decreased to 2,260 in 2011, and grew to 2,610 in 2012 (6.8 million violent victimizations) (Truman, Langton, & Planty, 2013), compared with 5.7 million violent victimizations in 2001 (Rennison, 2002). The rate of nonlethal violence in 2002 (2,300 per 100,000 persons aged 12 and older) was the lowest ever recorded in the NCVS (Lauritsen, 2009). In 2013, 6.1 million residents experienced violent crimes. The rate of violent crime (2,600.1 per 100,000 residents) declined 11% from the previous year. The decline in violent crime victimizations was the result of declines in stranger-on-stranger violence. From 2004 to 2013, the rate of violent crime declined 16%; this decline can be explained in part by the dramatic decline in the number of

crime victims (more than 400,000 fewer in 2013 than in 2004) during this period (Truman & Langton, 2014).

D. Summary of Violent Crime and Victimization Trends

As presented in Table 1 and Figure 1, violent victimization and crime generally declined from 1993 through 2013, with the steepest declines occurring in the 1990s (in both the UCR and NCVS data reporting programs). Declines continued in both programs during the 2000s but were less prominent than those reported in the 1990s; declines were comparatively less steep in the UCR dataset. The statistics reported in the NCVS and the UCR were highly correlated ($r = .79$) (i.e., the reductions in violent victimizations and crimes kept apace in both programs).

IV. Cost of Crime

A. Overview

Broadly defined to include interpersonal and self-inflicted acts of harm, violence is the leading cause of mortality and morbidity in the United States, resulting annually in 50,000 deaths and nearly \$2.2M in medically treated injuries (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2007). The costs of interpersonal violence alone are extensive and prodigious. The expenses incurred stem from premature deaths, injuries, and disabilities, which result in years of lost productivity as well as medical costs for injury-related treatment and physical rehabilitation. The economic burden of violent victimization is complicated and challenging to measure, and is especially difficult to document and compare systematically and reliably from place to place and year to year (Corso et al., 2007).

The costs of criminal victimization have been divided into two major components: tangible (e.g., victim loss and criminal justice expenditures) and intangible (e.g., pain, suffering,

psychological distress, diminished quality of life) (McCollister, French, & Fang, 2010) (see below). Since the 1980s, numerous studies have been conducted to estimate the costs of crime (Heaton, 2010). The first, and most-cited, methodology is the accounting approach, which draws upon various data sources (e.g., UCR, NCVS, NIBRS) in order to apply a basic cost calculus for each crime type (Miller, Cohen, & Wiersema, 1996). The second approach, contingent valuation, asks survey respondents about their willingness to pay for crime reduction programs for each type of crime (Harrison & Rustrom, 2008). The third approach, hedonic valuation, asks respondents to estimate the effects of crime on housing prices and other community amenities (Linden & Rockoff, 2008).

A recent RAND Corporation report compared the annual crime cost estimates (2007 dollars) of three high-quality studies (Heaton, 2010); two used the accounting approach (Cohen & Piquero, 2009; French, McCollister, & Reznik, 2004) and one used the contingent valuation approach (Cohen et al., 2004). Overall, the cost valuation approach yielded higher cost estimates than the accounting approach. The results of the studies were as follows: homicide (\$8.6M average), with a range of \$5M to \$12M; rape (\$217,866 average), with a range of \$150,000 to \$283,000; robbery (\$67,277 average), with a range of \$23,000 to \$127,715; and serious assault (\$87,238 average), with a range of \$55,000 to \$122,943.

These estimates vary greatly within and especially between approaches. Nevertheless, the author of the report noted, “It is clear from these numbers that the total social costs of crime are large, certainly much more than simply the costs of enforcement. Additionally, the fact that estimated costs are quite large when we look across several different methodologies for calculating costs gives us greater confidence that the actual social costs of crime are substantial” (Heaton, 2010, pp. 5–6). Indeed, the sizeable overall costs of crime victimization were

demonstrated in a study that combined data from several sources (e.g., UCR, NIBRS, NCVS) and covered a variety of expenditures, including criminal justice system costs (see below), crime victim costs (see below), and emotional costs (see below) (McCollister, French, & Fang, 2010). In 2008 dollars, the total approximate annual costs of a single incident of violent crime victimization were as follows: murder (\$9B), forcible rape (\$200,000), aggravated assault (\$13,000), and robbery (\$5,000).

B. Criminal Justice System Expenditures

The financial burdens of criminal victimization can be captured generally along three dimensions. The first type of financial burden involves the expense of operating the correctional system (federal, state, local), which had an \$80B price tag in 2010, growing 350% since 1980 (Kyckelhahn, 2013). These costs have stretched local and state budgets, begging for a reexamination of sentencing policies and the institution of reforms, such as a shift in public safety expenditures away from the use of prisons for nonviolent offenders to an investment of resources in education and local policing (Lofstrom & Raphael, 2013). Other substantial direct outlays stemming from criminal justice system operations include annual expenditures of \$113B for police protection and \$42B for the prosecutorial and judicial costs of processing state and local criminal cases (Kyckelhahn, 2011).

C. Direct Financial Losses to Victims

The second type of financial burden involves victim costs associated with lost property and wages, medical care, insurance premiums, crime prevention strategies, and other expenditures. For example, in 2004, the costs of violent crime exceeded \$1B (BJS, 2006b). In 2005, more than \$360M worth of property was stolen during robberies (FBI, 2005). From 1987 to 1990, crime cost an estimated \$450B annually, broken down into the following expenditures:

\$18B for medical and mental health care costs; \$87B for other tangible costs, such as lost (or damaged) property, income, and work productivity; and \$345B for costs associated with diminished quality of life (e.g., pain, suffering, fear, avoidance behaviors) (Miller, Cohen, & Wiersema, 1996). Crime victim costs can also include private and public expenditures for target-hardening and environmental modifications to reduce crime, such as safety lighting, security fences, locks, alarm systems, antiviral software programs, and armored car services (Anderson, 2011).

One of the most comprehensive national studies of the cost of violent victimization estimated that the economic burden of such experiences in 2000 was \$37B; most of the costs (89%, \$33B) were associated with lost productivity, and the remainder was attributable to medical expenses (11%, \$4B) (Corso et al., 2007). The costs of violent victimization were concentrated among young people (ages 15 to 44), who accounted for 75% of violence-related injuries and 83% of violence-related expenses. In 2000, homicides alone cost more than \$22B in terms of medical costs and lost productivity (Corso et al., 2007).

An earlier study found that the lifetime costs of violent victimization amounted to \$105B annually (in 1993 dollars), and included the costs associated with medical care, lost wages, and victim services. The estimate quadrupled with the inclusion of pain, suffering, and diminutions in the quality of victims' lives (Miller, Cohen, & Wiersema, 1996). The study also included a review of other studies that had attempted to quantify the intangible costs of crime. For example, one investigation combined the results of 50 studies to derive a lifetime estimation of \$2.7M attributable to each episode of fatal victimization (Miller, 1990). Using the same data source, another study determined that loss to be between \$3M and \$7M (Viscusi, 1993).

D. Emotional Burdens

The third type of financial burden involves the implicit cost of fear and the emotional sequelae of criminal victimization. The less tangible costs of crime include lasting psychological harm that destroys victims' ability to feel safe in their own homes or neighborhoods. Victimization can produce feelings of vulnerability, dread, chronic anxiety, and depression. Victims often struggle to regain a sense of control in their lives that is critical to well-being. Victimization can result in shame, guilt, self-blame, and isolation (Office of Victims of Crime, 1998); "these emotional costs can be more debilitating than the financial losses resulting from crime" (Doerner & Lab, 2015, p. 84). As noted above, fear of crime can be harmful to entire communities. Nearly 50 years ago, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (1967) asserted, "The most damaging of the effects of violent crime is fear, and that fear must not be belittled" (p. 3).

Fear of crime remains a pervasive and defining element in American culture (Warr, 1994) and is largely an emotional reaction and rarely based on a rational determination of the odds of being attacked (Warr, 2000). In terms of people's crime-related feelings and behaviors, perceived vulnerability trumps actual risk (Stiles, Halim, & Kaplan, 2003). For example, older white women express significant fear of violent crime despite being at low risk for such victimization. In contrast, younger men of color express little fear of violent crime even though they are at high risk for such victimization (Pastore & Maguire, 2002). Worry and concern about criminal victimization remain common in spite of steady reductions in violent and property crime. For example, one of five survey respondents reports being frequently or occasionally worried about being a victim of murder (Maguire, 2013).

A long-term insidious cost of violent victimization, fear of crime renders residents less likely to interact with neighbors and to use local businesses. Fear of violent crime can also cause

an exodus from neighborhoods, usually of those residents who are financially able to relocate, thereby decimating the core of the informal social control networks in communities and initiating the downward spiral of neighborhood decay (Cullen & Levitt, 1999; Skogan, 1990). This fear might be “the largest of the costs of crime” (Kleiman, Caulkins, & Gehred, 2014, p. 15). The costs of such devastation are incalculable.

Many victims of serious crime are diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a psychiatric problem that affects thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Victims’ “pain and suffering” resist quantification, but are among the most deleterious consequences of crime (DiMaggio & Galea, 2007). PTSD symptoms include intense anxiety, depression, recurrent and distressing dreams and recollections of the event, flashbacks of the episode, persistent symptoms of physiological reactivity (e.g., exaggerated startle responses, hypervigilance, and sleep difficulties), impairment in social and occupational functioning, and disrupted interpersonal relationships (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Compared with non-victims, crime victims experience significantly higher rates of current (10% vs. 4%) and lifetime (25% vs. 9%) PTSD (Kilpatrick & Acierno, 2003). The risk of developing PTSD is highest among victims of the most serious crimes: 49% among rape victims, 24% among other types of sexual assault victims, and 32% among aggravated assault victims (Sidran Foundation, 2004). Furthermore, crime victims have extremely high rates of comorbid psychiatric disorders; for example, in one study, 88% of male crime victims and 79% of female crime victims with symptoms of PTSD also met the diagnostic criteria for depression, substance use disorders, and phobias (Kilpatrick & Acierno, 2003).

The families and friends of homicide victims are another group (secondary victims) who are vulnerable to PTSD. Research has indicated that the current and lifetime prevalence rates of

PTSD among surviving family members and friends of homicide victims were 10% and 22%, respectively (Thompson, Norris, & Ruback, 1998). “Merely hearing about the victimization of a neighbor, friend, acquaintance, or coworker can also result in secondary victimization effects, such as increased anxiety and fear of crime” (Herman & Waul, 2004, p. 11). Female survivors of the homicide of a family member or close friend experienced higher rates of PTSD than non-homicide survivors (comparison group); 22% experienced lifetime PTSD, and 9% had current PTSD (Kilpatrick & Acierno, 2003).

An extensive review of numerous studies, spanning more than 30 years of research and a variety of methodologies and violent crime victim populations (also including the survivors of homicide), found considerable evidence of the adverse consequences of crime victimization on the quality of victims’ lives (Hanson, Sawyer, Begie, & Hubel, 2010). These consequences were described in three categories that operationally defined the components of “quality of life”: role functioning, social-material conditions and life satisfaction, and well-being. In terms of each of the three categories, violent crime victims can experience reductions in their ability to parent effectively (e.g., Casanueva et al., 2008), to enjoy healthy and satisfying interpersonal relationships (Nelson & Wampler, 2000), to work productively (e.g., Swanberg, Mack, & Logan, 2007), and to engage socially (e.g., Gutner et al., 2006). As noted previously, they are also likely to incur healthcare expenses (e.g., Max et al., 2004). However, evidence for the effects of violent victimization on life satisfaction and well-being is unclear (e.g., Michalos & Zumbo, 2000).

In support of the findings of the aforementioned review, a recent NCVS study found that more than two-thirds (68%) of serious violent crime victims (i.e., sexual assault, rape, robbery, firearm violence) experienced socio-emotional problems, which were defined as combinations of severe distress and problems in school, work, and relationships. More than 9 of 10 violent crime

victims reported some type of emotional symptoms (e.g., anxiety, vulnerability, depression), and more than 6 of 10 serious violent crime victims reported some type of physical symptoms (e.g., sleep problems, fatigue, gastrointestinal disturbances). More than three-quarters of the most serious violent crime victims (e.g., rape, firearm violence, violence with medically treated injuries) endured socio-emotional impact. Victims of violence who experienced socio-emotional problems were more likely than those who had no such problems to report the victimization to the police and to seek victim services (Langton & Truman, 2014).

E. Challenges in Measuring Costs

Estimates of the cost of violence are fraught with numerous methodological and measurement challenges (McCollister et al., 2010). Nonetheless, continued efforts should be made to capture the economic burden of violent crime, which is “draining U.S. society of vital resources” (Corso et al., 2007, p. 478). The complications that hinder the accurate estimation of cost are abundant. As discussed in this paper, underreporting of all types of violent crimes (with the exception of homicide in the UCR) occurs in both the UCR and NCVS, which are major repositories of cost-estimate data.

Undercounting is apparent in other realms of data collection. For example, a bias in cost estimates is produced when there is a failure to recognize and define a presentation in an emergency department visit as an instance of interpersonal violence (other than intimate partner violence). Physicians and other healthcare providers might neglect to ask about the intent of the injuries, and patients might be unwilling to report such injuries, which leads to underestimates of violence and its costs (Corso et al., 2007). Similarly, a significant percentage of violence-related injuries are never medically treated and, thus, are never calculated in the costs of violent victimization (Simon et al., 2006). A more substantial and troublesome shortcoming in the

estimation of the cost of violence is the fundamental lack of information on the “magnitude of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and child maltreatment” (Corso et al., 2007, p. 481).

Inaccuracies in measurement can be related to the victims themselves. For example, people in the lowest income strata are more likely to be victims of gunshots and other types of violent crimes (Cook & Ludwig, 2000). Their income levels are lower than average, and they might be less inclined to seek medical care due to lack of insurance coverage, though that might be changing with the passage of the Affordable Care Act. The over-representation of the economically disadvantaged among victims of violent crime suppresses overall cost estimates. Similarly, calculations of the costs of violent victimization are suppressed by the inclusion of women, youth, and the elderly (all typically lower wage earners). In addition, the costs attributable to the caretakers of victims (e.g., lost wages) are usually absent from the bottom line of economic burden (Corso et al., 2007).

V. Risk of Criminal Victimization: Demographic Characteristics and Theories of Victimization

The risk of violent victimization is related to several factors. Individuals’ vulnerability to violent crime varies with their demographic and personal characteristics, as well as with their participation in activities and social networks and their use of public places, which can increase their exposure to predation. Since 1937, theories of victimization have explored the dynamic interactions between victims and offenders as well as the victim or offender behaviors that culminate in violent outcomes (Tobolowsky, 2000).

Theories of victimization that focus on victim precipitation and involvement have been roundly criticized as “victim blaming,” especially by early victim advocates who sought to eliminate the pernicious stigmatization associated with sexual violence (Campbell & Raja,

1998). Nonetheless, theories of victimization have long contributed to the discourse on victimology and can further knowledge regarding the causes of violent victimization and strategies for its prevention (Doerner & Lab, 2015). Such perspectives argue that “choices of where to go, what to do, and how to proceed (even when made innocently) influence the chances of becoming a victim. Recognition of this process may provide insight into personal offenses, like homicide and assault” (Doerner & Lab, 2015, p. 56).

A. Demographic Characteristics

1. Age. A wealth of data from the NCVS has demonstrated a consistent and strong inverse relationship between age and criminal victimization (BJS, 2008). Rates of personal crimes peak among those ages 16 to 24 and are lowest among those 65 and older. In particular, rates of violent crime victimization (e.g., robbery, aggravated assault) are much higher for younger people than for older people; the difference is less pronounced for property offenses. The victimization and offending rates for homicide both peak for young people between the ages of 18 and 24. More than one-third of homicide victims and nearly one-half of homicide perpetrators are younger than age 25. Violent victimization in the late 1980s and early 90s was concentrated disproportionately among persons younger than age 24, particularly among teenagers (Lauritsen, 2009). The homicide rates of adolescents and young adults increased steeply from the late 1980s to the early 90s, with a peak in 1993, demonstrating that “lethal violence in the late 1980s and early 90s [was] primarily a youth phenomenon” (Lauritsen, 2009, p. 74). Between 1999 and 2008, homicide rates were stable for people ages 35 to 49 and those older than age 50 (Cooper & Smith, 2011). From 2002 to 2011, the homicide rate was highest among young adults ages 18 to 24; from 2002 to 2011, young adults also experienced the

greatest decline (22%) in the homicide rate, from 15.2 to 11.9 per 100,000 residents (Smith & Cooper, 2013).

2. Race and Ethnicity. Prior to 2003, the NCVS distinguished between only white and black for reporting purposes. From 1973 to 2006, the violent crime rate among blacks was double the rate among whites. This differential has appeared during periods of increases and decreases, as well as peaks and troughs, in victimization data. For example, the rate of violent victimization among blacks in 1981 (a peak year) was roughly 4,000 per 100,000 residents; among whites, it was roughly 2,000 per 100,000 residents. The rate of violent victimization among blacks in 2002 (a trough year) was roughly 1,200 per 100,000 residents; amongw, it was roughly 600 per 100,000 residents (BJS, 2008).

Blacks have been consistently over-represented as both homicide victims and homicide offenders, with victimization rates six times higher and offending rates eight times higher than those of whites. Young (age 14 to 24) black men constitute 1% of the general population but 16% of homicide victims and 27% of homicide offenders (since 1994), declining from a high of 35% of homicide offenders in 1993. Black men are also significantly more likely than white men to be victims of drug-related homicides. Homicide, however, is intraracial: 84% of white victims are killed by white offenders, and 93% of black victims are killed by black offenders (Cooper & Smith, 2011). Black men lose more years of life before age 65 to homicide than to heart disease, which is the nation's leading cause of death (Heller et al., 2013). The homicide gap between blacks and whites is five to one (Lauritsen, 2009) and between Hispanics and whites is two to one (Langley & Sugarman, 2014).

The UCR database on violent crime contains no information about ethnicity; nonetheless, ethnic differences can be discerned from the NCVS (Lauritsen & Heimer, 2010). For example, in

2013, with respect to the percentage of the population within a category of ethnicity, persons of two or more races experienced the most violent crime (excluding homicide) at approximately 4%, accounting for 114,190 crime victims, followed by American Indians and Alaska Natives at approximately 3%, accounting for 38,310 violent crime victims. Blacks (1.3%) and Hispanics (1.3%) experienced slightly higher percentage rates than whites (1.1%), accounting for 430,380 540,130, and 1.9 million violent crime victims, respectively. In 2004, Hispanics (1.2%) experienced a lower prevalence rate of violent victimization than both whites (1.5%) and blacks (1.7%). The rates of violent and serious violent crime in 2013 were highest among blacks (2,510 per 100,000 residents and 950 per 100,000 residents, respectively), followed by Hispanics (2,480 per 100,000 residents and 750 per 100,000 residents, respectively) and whites (2,220 per 100,000 residents and 680 per 100,000 residents, respectively). By far, the rates of violent and serious violent crime in 2013 were highest among American Indians and Alaska Natives (5,630 per 100,000 residents and 3,900 per 100,000 residents, respectively) (Truman & Langton, 2014).

3. Gender. Men commit more than 70% of all types of crimes (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011) and also fall prey disproportionately to victimization. With the exceptions of rape and intimate partner violence, the rate of violent victimization is substantially higher among men than among women. The gender differential in violent victimization is greatest in the youngest age category (ages 12 to 24), begins to diminish after age 25, starts to converge after age 35, and becomes nearly equivalent at age 65 and older (Laub, 1997). Men are overwhelmingly the victims (77%) and perpetrators (90%) of homicide. The homicide rate is three times higher among men than women, and the rate of offending is nine times higher among men than women; however, women are substantially more likely than men to be victims of intimate partner violence (64%) and sex-related murder (82%) (Cooper & Smith, 2011). The gender gap steadily

narrowed in terms of both violent crime and serious violent crime rates from 2004 to 2013 (Truman & Langton, 2014). From 2002 to 2011, the homicide rates among men and women declined by 16% and 20%, respectively (Copper & Smith, 2013).

4. Income. The risk of violent victimization rises rapidly with extreme poverty and disadvantage (Lauritsen, 2009). Also at higher risk for violence are adults living alone and parenting their children alone (single parents) (Lauritsen, 2009). The relationship between economic disadvantage and violence has been consistently found in cross-sectional research at various levels of analyses (e.g., states, census tracts, neighborhoods) (e.g., Land, McCall, & Cohen, 1990; Land, McCall, & Cohen, 1991; Lauritsen, 2001; Lauritsen & Heimer, 2010; Lauritsen & White, 2001; Peterson, Krivo, & Hahan, 2006; Rosenfeld & Fornago, 2007). Strains on neighborhood economies and corresponding family incomes have independent effects on individuals' risk of victimization (Lauritsen, 2001) and increase the likelihood of intimate partner violence (Benson, Fox, De Maris, & Van Wyk, 2003).

Research has indicated that people in lower income brackets are more likely to be victimized than people in higher income brackets. For example, people with annual household incomes of \$7,500 are more than three times more likely to be a victim of robbery and more than four times more likely to be a victim of aggravated assault than those with annual household incomes of \$75,000 (BJS, 2008). The violent crime victimization rate in 2010 was three times higher for people with annual household incomes of less than \$15,000 than for those with annual household incomes greater than \$75,000 (Kearney, Harris, Jacome, & Parker, 2014). An evaluation of the Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration Program showed that the provision of resources to lift residents out of oppressive poverty reduced victimization rates by more than 15% among program participants (Katz, Klingid, & Liebman, 2000).

During the years 2008 to 2012, people living at or below the federal poverty level for households were more than twice as likely to be a victim of violent crime as those living in the highest-income-bracket households (3,980 per 100,000 residents versus 1,690 per 100,000 residents, respectively). People living in poor households experienced serious violent victimization at a rate three times higher than those living in the highest-income-bracket households (1,520 per 100,000 residents versus 450 per 100,000 residents, respectively). In addition, people at or below the federal poverty level were more likely to be victims of stranger- and firearm-related violent victimization. The overall inverse relationship between household income and violent victimization (from 2008 to 2012) was the same for blacks and whites; however, the rate of violent victimization for Hispanics was invariant across income levels (Harrell et al., 2014).

5. Location of Residence. Violent crimes are more likely to occur in major metropolitan areas (big cities) than in suburban and rural areas. In 2012, for example, the rate of serious violent victimization in urban areas was more than double that in rural areas (Truman, Langton, & Planty, 2013). Homicides are most likely to occur in large cities, particularly those with a population of 1 million or more (Cooper & Smith, 2011). From 2002 to 2011, cities of 100,000 or more residents experienced the largest decline (23%) in homicide rates, compared with smaller communities (i.e., those with fewer than 100,000 residents) (Smith & Copper, 2013). The highest percentages of violent victimization occur in the South, followed by the Western, Midwestern, and Northeastern regions of the country. The proportion of murders that occur in the South (43%) was more than three times greater than the proportion in the Northeast (12%) (FBI, 2006). However, in 2013, the rates of violent and serious violent victimization were highest in the Western region and lowest in the Southern region (Truman & Langton, 2014).

B. Theories of Victimization

For more than 70 years, theories of victimology have explored victims' roles in violent criminal incidents. Unlike criminological theories, which underscore the causes of crime in terms of offender characteristics and motivations, victimological theories postulate that victim characteristics and motivations can affect the risk of victimization overall, as well as the instigation and culmination of specific criminal encounters. In such theories, victims exert varying degrees of influence over the occurrences and eventualities of criminal attacks. Thus, these theories have assumed that the offender-victim dyad can create or alter episodes of criminal attack through a process of shared responsibility. As discussed below, such frameworks have been subjected to fierce criticism due to their emphasis on victim blaming (Karmen, 1991). Other theories of victimology have examined sociological and environmental factors that can affect victimization risk at different times and places without assigning responsibility to victims for contributing to their own harm.

1. Early Typologies of Crime Victims. From the late 1930s through the 1950s, Mendelsohn and his colleagues (most notably von Hentig, 1948) “explored the relationships between victims and offenders . . . [and] developed victim typologies that identified victim characteristics that might increase a person’s risk of victimization . . . or even contribute to or precipitate the victimization” (Tobolowsky, 2000, p. 18). Such frameworks became the foundation for victim precipitation theory and were considered an improvement over the static, one-sided, perpetrator-centric explanations of traditional criminologists (Fattah, 1979).

Mendelsohn (1956) created hierarchical levels or classes of victim culpability, ranging from the “completely innocent victim” to the “victim as guilty as the offender” to the “victim guiltier than the offender.” Based on Mendelsohn’s formulations, Wolfgang (1958) studied

patterns in criminal homicide, which suggested that victims played a major role in their own killing by being “the first to show and use a deadly weapon, to strike a blow in an altercation—in short, the first to commence the interplay or resort to physical violence” (p. 252). In Wolfgang’s (1958) investigation, more than one-fourth of the homicides began with a dispute that culminated in death. He also found that many of the homicides in his research involved non-strangers as well as the use of alcohol. Wolfgang even speculated that some homicide victims were actually suicidal and provoked their killers in order to fulfill a death wish (Wolfgang, 1959).

Schafer (1968) built upon the preceding theories to create more explicit and detailed gradations of victim precipitation. The lowest degree of victim culpability or contribution to the victimization involves instances of no victim responsibility (innocent target of offender). Other categories ascribe greater responsibility to victims with respect to their role in facilitating the crime, such as precipitative victims (i.e., when the offender is reacting to the victim’s behaviors) and self-victimizing victims (e.g., people who gamble, use drugs, or engage in the sex trade). One influential study of victim precipitation that involved a national sample of police reports defined victim precipitation—for example, in the case of aggravated assault—as “occurring when the victim was the first to use either physical force or insinuating language and gestures against the subsequent attacker” (Curtis, 1974, p. 598). The research found that victim precipitation was most common in incidents of homicide, followed by aggravated assault and robbery.

2. Lifestyle Exposure Theory. Lifestyle exposure theory aligns with the preceding discussion regarding the relationship between demographic characteristics and victimization risk (see above). Indeed, the lifestyle exposure model comprises variations in demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, race, income). Such differences affect people’s lifestyles, which

encompass “routine daily activities, both vocational activities (work, school, keeping house, etc.) and leisure activities” (Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978, p. 241) (see below). Several explanatory models predict that demographic characteristics are related to lifestyle choices, which affect the risk of criminal victimization (e.g., Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978; Kennedy & Forde, 1990).

Specifically, lifestyle factors that can affect the risk of violent victimization include the kinds of activities people engage in and the “where and when” of those activities (see Cullen & Wilcox, 2010). For example, frequenting bars in high-crime areas and exiting them alone and intoxicated in the middle of the night are a recipe for becoming a victim of armed robbery or some other type of violent crime. Taxi drivers and musicians often work late hours in high-crime areas—lifestyle factors that might explain their high rates of robbery. In contrast, spending quiet evenings in a secure suburban home reading a book by the fireplace is likely to keep a person out of harm’s way. Elementary school teachers and college professors have an affinity for activities that keep them in safe environments, which might explain their lower likelihood of being victims of robbery (cf., Fattah, 1991).

Between these extremes is a continuum of risk that varies with individual characteristics, behaviors, and the settings in which people interact with others. Unstructured time in public (especially at night); attenuated ties to family, school, and work; and attachments to criminal subgroups and cultures create fallow ground for criminal activities and victimization (Hindelang et al., 1978). In addition, alcohol and drug use, coupled with structural variables in a community that create places for offenders to gather with little or no guardianship, also increase the risk of violent victimization (Cullen & Wilcox, 2010) (see below).

3. Routine Activities Theory. Routine activities theory and lifestyle theory are obviously linked (Meir & Miethe, 1993). With a focus on the social ecology of crime, the routine activities theory posits that the concurrence of three elements increases the likelihood of violent victimization: motivated (likely) offenders, suitable and attractive targets (people and objects), and the absence of capable guardians whose presence or watchfulness could prevent the occurrence of a crime (Cohen & Felson, 1979). The risk of victimization increases when offenders and targets are in proximity to each other, providing offenders with ready and practicable opportunities for offenses. The likelihood of victimization also increases when offenders are undeterred by other persons who might intervene or identify them and when they have easy egress from the scene. Together, these conditions facilitate the commission of a criminal act by creating a perfect storm for victimization.

With respect to victimogenesis (cause of victimization), routine activities theory emphasizes the probability of certain individuals (prospective victims) traversing certain locations at certain times and under certain circumstances, which leads them into contact with certain people (prospective offenders) (Hindelang et al., 1978; Meier & Miethe, 1993). The risk of becoming a victim is heavily dependent upon the number of hours spent outside the home; the frequency of leaving the home in the evening and returning late at night, including being a habitué of bars and other alcohol-serving establishments; and the likelihood of contacts with neighborhood offenders (Killias, 1989). Routine activities theory emphasizes situational elements—namely, the opportunity for committing a crime and the lack of informal controls among potential victims, and also in their personal environment (Miethe & Meier, 1994). “Taken together, a routine activity approach predicts the greatest risks for predatory crime when potential victims have high target suitability (i.e., high visibility, accessibility, and attractiveness)

and low levels of guardianship” (Meir & Miethe, 1993, p. 474).

According to research on routine activities theory, the precipitous increase in crime between 1960 and 1970 was attributable to an increase in suitable targets due to the purchase of more durable goods, such as cars, bicycles, and stereos, and the proliferation of unoccupied homes during the daytime. The increase in durable goods was accompanied by a decrease in capable guardians, as more women joined the workforce and more families engaged in leisure activities outside of the home. The existence of more empty homes created greater opportunities for burglaries. Similarly, the presence of more women in public rendered them more vulnerable to criminal victimization (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Numerous other studies have found some empirical support for routine activities as an explanatory framework for crimes, such as residential burglary and theft (Cohen & Cantor, 1980), and for urban homicides (Messner & Tardiff, 1985), as well as repeat victimizations (Gottfredson, 1981).

4. Fattah’s Theory of Victimization and the Structured-Choice Model. Fattah’s (1991) theory of criminal victimization risk consists of 10 basic factors that include the dimensions (and convergences) of person, place, and time. The model also attributes the risk of victimization to behaviors that can be provocative, which increases the likelihood of violent crime, or negligent, which in turn increases the likelihood of property crime. Scenarios that are more or less conducive to crime are determined by personal characteristics that are correlated with victimization, such as age and gender, the communities in which people live (e.g., high- or low-crime neighborhoods), the places in which people socialize and the times when they are there (e.g., “places of public entertainment, where the risks of becoming a victim are higher than at work or at home” [Fattah, 1991, p. 19]), and the individual’s inclination to engage in high-risk behaviors (e.g., soliciting a prostitute, purchasing illegal drugs, participating in other markets for

illicit goods and services, interacting with known offenders). The dynamic, interactive perspective of victim precipitation attributes no blame to victim behavior and contains no normative or value judgments, such as victim guilt or responsibility (Fattah, 1994).

Fattah's (1991) theory has never been translated into a well-specified and testable conceptual framework (cf. Smith & Bouffard, 2014). Nonetheless, it aligns with the structural choice model of victimization, which integrates lifestyle exposure theory with routine activities theory (Miethe & Meier, 1990). The model contains macrodynamic factors, such as the high- and low-crime neighborhoods in Fattah's theory, which constitute a criminal opportunity structure for victimization by bringing together victims and offenders in physical proximity with one another. Residents in areas with lower criminal opportunity structures are at lower risk for predatory victimization, and vice versa. These factors are combined with microlevel processes—the lifestyle exposure components of Fattah's theory—that determine the accessibility of victimization targets. Offenders rationally select targets as a function of net rewards (risk versus benefit ratios) (Meir & Miethe, 1993).

5. Typologies of Victim Accountability. Karmen's (2004) typology of victim accountability consists of six victim categories that are defined by increasing blameworthiness or shared responsibility, ranging from complete innocence to facilitation, precipitation, provocation, or active participation in a crime. More germane to violent crime victims are Karmen's (2006) dimensions of victim involvement in the incident: repeat victims, facilitating victims, precipitating victims, and innocent victims. Repeat victims routinely place themselves in risky situations. The following example uses aggravated assault in a bar setting.

A young man who continues to frequent a bar, despite its reputation as a setting for violent altercations and his previous experiences of being assaulted there, is an example of a

repeat victim. With respect to victim facilitation, victims are partially responsible for their attacks because they “unknowingly, carelessly, negligently, foolishly, and unwillingly make it easier for the criminal to commit the crime” (Karmen, 2006, p. 101). A young man who frequents a bar on an evening in which he will be in contact with a crowd of men who have threatened to assault him if he returns on the day they are there is an example of a facilitating victim. A young man who frequents a bar becomes intoxicated and pushes and verbally threatens a patron. He is involved in a serious altercation in which he initiated the brawl; this is an example of a precipitating victim. Finally, a young man walks past a bar during the afternoon. He is attacked from behind unprovoked by one of the patrons emerging from the establishment and is clearly an innocent victim.

6. Social Disorganization Theory. Apart from individual differences, community-level factors (e.g., poverty, unemployment, income inequality, residential instability, percentage of single-parent households) can exert pressure on residents to engage in delinquent and criminal behaviors, which increase the risk of violent victimization (e.g., Bursik & Webb, 1982). These factors are captured in social disorganization theory, which originated in the seminal research of the Chicago School of Sociology (Bulmer, 1984). Among a wealth of major empirical findings regarding the causes of delinquency and criminality, Chicago School researchers found that disorganized areas marked by divergent values and transitional populations produce criminality (e.g., Shaw & McKay, 1972).

Social disorganization theory suggests that violent victimization is more likely to occur in areas where social control has deteriorated and neighborhood homogeneity and solidarity have diminished (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993). Racial inequality creates social isolation and concentrations of truly disadvantaged residents. In such communities, social organization is

weakened, family cohesiveness is diminished, and structural barriers deny residents legitimate opportunities for social mobility and success. These conditions spawn subcultures in which crime, violence, and illegal drug use become normative (Sampson & Wilson, 1995). Several studies have tested macro-sociological theories that hypothesize about the effects of social structures on differential rates of violent victimization. For example, these investigations have indicated that violent victimization levels are higher in communities that are more heterogeneous in terms of race and age (Sampson, 1984); that are characterized by weaker friendship networks and lower rates of participation in formal and voluntary community organizations (Sampson & Groves, 1989); and that have lower levels of collective efficacy (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997), which is the ability of residents to share values as well as pool efforts and resources in order to solve problems that adversely affect the commonweal.

7. Social Network Theory. Social network theory is the study of how people establish relationships and interact with one another in reciprocal and nonreciprocal exchanges. Networks can also be described as the structure of interrelationships, and people in the network referred to as actors or nodes in the network (Freeman, 2004). For incidents in which victim and offender relationships are known, the vast majority of homicides (78%) involve nonstrangers, such as a spouse, other family member, or acquaintance (i.e., members of the same social network) (Cooper & Smith, 2011).

Victims of violent crime and violent offenders often live in the same social and physical environments and have similar backgrounds and proclivities. For example, more than 90% of homicide suspects and more than 70% of homicide victims in Chicago have criminal convictions (Rozas, 2009). Similarly, more than 80% of homicide victims in Baltimore have criminal records (Herman, 2009); those percentages are 77% and 75% in Milwaukee and Philadelphia,

respectively (Johnson, 2007). In Chicago, people who simply knew a homicide victim were nine times more likely than those who did not to become a victim or perpetrator of homicide (Papachristos, Braga, & Hureau, 2012). As Papachristos (2009) states, “[homicide offenders] do not kill because they are poor, black, or young or live in a socially disadvantaged neighborhood. They kill because they live in a structured set of social relations in which violence works its way through a series of connected individuals” (p. 75).

Based on social network theory, police officials in Chicago launched a custom notification initiative in the city’s most violent neighborhoods. As part of the initiative, the department created a “heat list” consisting of potential victims and subjects with the greatest propensity to become involved in future violence. The list is based on an analysis of the identified person’s known associates, as well as the person’s history of violence as a perpetrator and/or victim. Tailored to the background of each person, a custom notification letter is hand-delivered to the individuals’ homes to inform them of the consequences (i.e., arrest, prosecution, and sentencing) of new or continued participation in violent acts. The letter also provides information about the availability of employment or other social services to help extricate the individual from a high-risk lifestyle. No known studies of the effects of this program have been conducted, but this initiative seems promising and could benefit from an empirical investigation of its impact.

8. Limitations of Victim Precipitation and Lifestyle Theories. The basic assumptions of victim precipitation theories have been challenged. For example, victim precipitation presumes that victims’ behaviors can fully explain the criminal act; that offenders only decide to engage in the act after the victim provokes the offender through signals and behaviors that are necessary and sufficient for the act to occur; and that the incident involves discernible victim

intent as an element of precipitation (Franklin & Franklin, 1976). Routine activities theory is one of the best-known, best-studied, and most-cited of the above victimization theories (Doerner & Lab, 2015). Yet studies of this theory as well as similar theories of victimization are challenged by definitional issues, such as the operationalization of a “potential offender,” “vulnerable target,” and “capable guardian.” Also elusive in terms of measurement and interpretation is the concept of “lifestyle.”

By the 1970s, so-called “anti-victim” perspectives, which are predicated on victim blame and responsibility, had been roundly criticized in various quarters (Karmen, 1991). Many scholars and victim advocates have denounced the ideological basis of such concepts as victim provocation, precipitation, and facilitation. These notions were equated with a radical form of victim blaming that placed inordinate emphasis on victims’ instead of offenders’ culpability in violent attacks (Karmen, 1991). Such explanations and their corresponding prevention programs and strategies were relatively ineffective in controlling crime and therefore served little purpose other than to criticize crime victims (Karmen, 1991).

Victim precipitation theories are also problematic for several other reasons (Eigenberg, 2014). The presumption of these perspectives is that victims know how to prevent their victimization and can always eschew risky behaviors and avoid risky places. Absolute avoidance ignores reality in a free and complex society in which victimization is pervasive, especially in poor neighborhoods where the risk of violent victimization is disproportionately high. Victimization is traumatic (see section on costs), and victim blame adds to the suffering of crime victims (see section on crime victim assistance) and draws attention away from the root causes of crime and violence (e.g., intergenerational poverty).

Perhaps the most vehement attacks on victim blame were leveled against Amir's (1971) research on rape, which strongly suggested that a certain percentage of such victims bore responsibility for their attacks. The backlash from feminists and victim service providers was especially fierce, leading to a heightened sensitivity toward victim blaming, which was regarded as tantamount to offender rationalization (criminal thinking and neutralization) as a cognitive strategy to dismiss victim suffering and loss (Fattah, 1979). From a methodological standpoint, Amir was criticized for relying solely on official police records and employing theoretical perspectives that lacked empirical support (Meier & Miethe, 1993). In addition, Amir was disparaged for proffering psychological explanations on the basis of aggregate-level data and for rendering extreme inferences from a limited dataset (Meier & Miethe, 1993).

In general, studies of victim precipitation have been rife with other methodological shortcomings, including the interchangeable operational uses of the terms 'facilitation,' 'precipitation,' and 'provocation' (Smith & Bouffard, 2014). True victim precipitation is difficult to examine due to the absence or incompleteness of data in police records regarding the victim's role as the primary and direct aggressor in a crime. For example, homicide cases defy easy explanations of the victim's role in the event. The victim is obviously unable to recount the attack. Homicides often occur in private settings and are often witnessed by only two people—the offender and the victim—only one of whom is able to illuminate the specific nature of the event and who is likely to be a highly self-serving reporter. Furthermore, studies of victim precipitation rarely incorporate statistical controls; therefore, results stemming from such studies are often inconclusive and provide no valid or elucidative sense of the effects of victim behaviors on the initiation or culmination of the crime (Smith & Bouffard, 2014).

VI. Assistance for Crime Victims

A. Crime Victims' Movement

As noted above, crime victims can experience various adverse consequences that often require ameliorative care and services. The recognition of crime victims as a group with special needs and interests gained widespread notoriety and momentum in the crime victims' movement, which emerged from a confluence of events. Initially, the overall purpose of the victims' movement was to reintegrate victims into the criminal justice system by inviting them to participate in the prosecution of their cases (Davis, Smith, & Henley, 1990; Doerner & Lab, 2015). Four major factors—political, social, research, and legal developments—were responsible for the early growth of the movement (Young & Stein, 2004).

1. Victimology. The first factor in the early growth of the crime victims' movement was the emergence of the field of victimology. Victimology is the scientific study of crime victims, their relationship to offenders, and the situations and behaviors that place them at risk for criminal victimization. Victimologists also study the harmful consequences of crime as well as the effectiveness of victim service programs (Karmen, 2004). Schafer's (1968) book, *The Victim and His Criminal*, released in the midst of the enormous crime wave of the 1960s, was an influential publication that spurred interest in victimology as an area worthy of scholarly attention and as a source of knowledge that could help explain and stifle the unexpected and unprecedented explosion in crime sweeping the United States, which continued, mostly unabated, for the next 20 years (see above). In the 1990s, however, critics attacked the field of victimology for becoming more ideological and less scientific and for urging victims to embrace the "victim identity," which critics believed perpetuated victim suffering (Karmen, 2004).

2. Victim Compensation. The second factor in the early growth of the victims' movement was the development of victim compensation programs, initiated in New Zealand

(1963) and Great Britain (1964) through the advocacy efforts of Margery Fry, an English magistrate (Edelhertz & Geis, 1974). In the United States, the first victim compensation programs appeared in California (1966) and New York (1966), and were predicated on the notion that crime victims are citizens who deserve government assistance. By 2002, all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam had instituted victim compensation programs (Doerner & Lab, 2015).

Compensation programs originated as a concept in ancient Greece and Rome and have been characterized as “welfare programs” for crime victims (Schafer, 1970). In these programs, the state assumed responsibility for victims’ care and accepted blame for their plight due to “[its] long inattention to poverty and social injustice,” considered to be among the root causes of crime (Goldberg, 1970, p. 176). In the 1970s, the notion of victim compensation as a vehicle for attaining justice and encouraging victim participation in the criminal justice system replaced the notion of victim compensation as a vehicle for victim healing. Accordingly, filing a police report and cooperating with the prosecution became prerequisites for receiving state funds to pay for medical bills or replace lost wages (Young & Stein, 2004).

3. Women’s Movement. The third factor spurring the victims’ movement was the women’s movement, which empowered female victims of sexual assault and domestic violence to demand more respectful and humane treatment in the court system. The women’s movement also offered victim advocates examples of effective strategies to increase public attention to social and political issues, and such strategies led to the creation of laws and public policies that benefited female victims of crime (Young & Stein, 2004). The early focus on the emotional devastation of sexual assault victims paved the way for research on the emotional suffering of crime victims in general (Lurigio, 1987), “increasing public sensitivity to the psychological

effects of crime on victims, particularly feelings of powerlessness, isolation, and guilt” (Friedman, 1985, p. 791).

4. System Failure. The fourth factor propelling the victims’ movement was the failure of the criminal justice system to control crime and bring offenders to justice. Confidence in the system began to erode with the rising crime rates in the 1960s and reached a nadir with a widely cited and controversial review of the effect of correctional programs, which concluded that “nothing works” with regard to the rehabilitation of criminals. As Martinson (1974) stated, “with few and isolated exceptions, the rehabilitative efforts that have been reported so far [have] had no appreciative effect on recidivism” (p. 25). The court system’s effectiveness was also challenged, as a greater proportion of cases were lost and an increasing number of crime victims walked away disheartened and dissatisfied with the legal process (Friedman, 1985). Witnesses who were initially cooperative but turned their backs on the court system after they received shoddy treatment from police officers, prosecutors, and judges caused most prosecutorial failures (Cannavale & Falcon, 1976).

In other words, the system that was supposed to assist crime victims and punish offenders instead harmed victims by neglecting their basic needs and making their cooperation in the court process difficult and emotionally painful (Bard & Sangrey, 1979). Victims were expected to participate in a court system that had “treated them with less respect than it [had] treated the offender” (Sales, Rich, & Reich, 1984, p. 114). Victims’ negative experiences were so common that their participation in the criminal justice system resulted in a “second wound,” also referred to as “secondary victimization” (Lurigio, Skogan, & Davis, 1990; Symonds, 1980).

5. Grassroots Efforts. The final factor affecting the growth of the victims’ movement was the proliferation of grassroots organizations and shelters founded mostly by crime victims to

support other crime victims and their surviving family members. These organizations sustained victims in their efforts to recover from the trauma and hardship encountered in the aftermath of crime. In addition, they advocated for changes in laws that led to the development of additional government services and victim protection and compensation programs (Young & Stein, 2004).

According to Davis and Henley (1990):

Operating with close ties to the community rather than to the criminal justice system did have some advantages. Grassroots programs were tied to service networks within the community. Being outside of the criminal justice system, the programs had the credibility to work with victims distrustful of the system, including those who didn't report crimes to authorities (p. 162).

The victims' movement spawned the implementation of various reforms and interventions to enhance public sensitivity toward crime victims as well as improve their treatment—both in and out of the criminal justice system. Numerous victim service programs were established independently or in conjunction with police departments and prosecutors' offices in order to satisfy victims' needs for compensation, justice, and services (Davis & Henley, 1990). The favorable attention to crime victims that arose during the 1970s occurred at the national, state, and local levels.

B. President's Task Force on Victims of Crime

President Ronald Reagan took an historic step forward in the federal government's recognition of crime victims by proclaiming National Victims of Crime Week in 1981. One year later, advocacy for crime victims gained further impetus with the convening of the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime (1982), which was formed in response to a presidential executive order that called for a nationwide study of the criminal justice system's treatment of crime victims. Its members argued that, "If we take the justice out of the criminal justice system, we leave behind a system that serves the criminal" (p. vi).

After interviewing crime victims and experts in the field of victim assistance, task force members ultimately proposed 68 recommendations in 5 general areas: executive and legislative action at the federal and state levels; federal action; action for criminal justice system professionals (e.g., police officers, prosecutors, judges, parole board members); action for other organizations (e.g., hospitals, churches, schools, mental health agencies); and an amendment to the US Constitution, augmenting the Sixth Amendment rights of crime victims, guaranteeing that “the victims in every criminal prosecution shall have the right to be present and to be heard at all critical stages of judicial proceedings” (Hook & Seymour, 2004, p. 113).

C. Victims’ Rights

In 1982, Congress passed the Omnibus Victim and Witness Protection Act, which mandated that victim impact statements must be considered at sentencing in all federal criminal cases. The act’s provisions also required that victims and witnesses be protected from defendant intimidation and that victims receive offender restitution. Additionally, the act promulgated guidelines for the fair and humane treatment of victims and recommended stricter bail laws (Davis & Henley, 1990).

The US Supreme Court first acknowledged the rights of crime victims in *Morris v. Slappy* (1983). In this case, the Supreme Court held that a victim’s rights had been properly affirmed when it reversed a Court of Appeals ruling to overturn a verdict against a defendant. The defendant argued that his due process rights were violated when a judge refused to reschedule his case because his original public defender was unavailable on his court date (Viano, 1987). In reversing the lower court’s decision, the Supreme Court stated that the “court (of appeals) wholly failed to take into account the interest of the victim of these crimes, and that . . . in the administration of criminal justice, courts may not ignore the concerns of victims . . . this

is especially so when the crime is one calling for public testimony about a humiliating and degrading experience” [103 S. Ct. 1618].

In 1984, Congress passed the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), “ending nearly 20 years of floor debates, lobbying, political posturing, maneuvering, and last-minute compromises” (Karmen, 2004, p. 318). The passage of VOCA reasserted the federal government’s role in the victim assistance field and provided substantial resources for the continued expansion of that role (Newmark, 2006). VOCA established a federal Crime Victims Fund consisting exclusively of revenue from the payment of fines, penalties, bond forfeitures, and special assessments leveled against individuals and businesses (Doerner & Lab, 2015).

VOCA generates millions of dollars to support state victim compensation and assistance programs (Deem, Nerenberg, & Titus, 2007; Gaboury, 1992). Since its inception, the Crime Victims Fund has received more than \$13B. In 2010 alone, the fund generated \$2.3B for disbursement to crime victims. Approximately \$40M of those dollars was allocated for improving services for victims of federal crimes (Office for Victims of Crime [OVC], 2011). To be eligible for VOCA funding, state programs must, for example, encourage victims to cooperate in the prosecution and conviction of defendants; include victims of drunk driving or domestic violence among those eligible for benefits; expand accessibility to services, particularly for victims in underserved populations; and maximize resources in order to reduce the various costs of crime (Gaboury, 1992; Newmark, 2006).

VOCA allows funds to be used to compensate victims of financial crimes, such as fraud, cybercrimes, identity theft, and financial abuse of the elderly. Victims of financial crimes are an underserved population eligible for direct assistance in several areas, including mental health assistance, respite care, and advocacy services (OVC, 2004). VOCA funds can also be awarded

to states for public education and publications geared toward preventing financial victimization (Deem et al., 2007).

D. Justice for All Act

In 2004, President George W. Bush signed into law the Justice for All Act (H.R. 5107, Public Law 108-405). The act was designed to protect crime victims' rights and eliminate the backlog of DNA samples gathered from convicted offenders and crime scenes, as well as those collected for inclusion in a federal DNA repository. Furthermore, the act amended the federal criminal code to accord crime victims with several specific rights, such as the right to be notified of any public court proceeding or parole hearing and to receive victim restitution. The act also allows federal crime victims—under certain circumstances—to petition the court to reconsider plea agreements or sentences (OVC, 2006).

In the previous two decades, all states have passed laws in support of victims' rights as well as a victims' bill of rights (National Center for Victims of Crime [NCVC], 2007). These rights include the right to be treated with fairness and respect; to receive a written explanation of their legal rights at first contact with the criminal justice system; to be notified when the state begins the prosecution process; to have their dignity and privacy protected during the criminal justice process; to be heard at proceedings; to be protected from the alleged or convicted offender before, during, and after the trial; to obtain information from the criminal justice system regarding the progress of their cases; and to be given information about social services and victim compensation for medical expenses and lost or damaged property. Once defendants are convicted, victims have the right to address the court or submit a written statement regarding the crime's effect on their lives, which the judge can consider in rendering a sentencing decision (cf. National Victims' Constitutional Amendment Network, 2012).

E. Victim Service and Compensation Programs

1. Service Programs. As noted previously in this paper, the victims' movement in the United States emerged in the 1970s. A major component of the movement was the creation of victim service and compensation programs. Fueled by grassroots efforts and spurred by Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) funding, victim service programs proliferated in the United States and in numerous other countries, especially those located in Great Britain and Europe. Between 1970 and 1975, the LEAA spent more than \$22M on these programs, which are typically housed in police departments and prosecutors' agencies to facilitate victim cooperation "in the apprehension, prosecution, and conviction of criminals" (Davis, Lurigio, & Skogan, 1999, p. 101).

Since the 1970s, victim service programs have received hundreds of millions of VOCA dollars earmarked for victim assistance and compensation (Doerner & Lab, 2015). Victim service programs offer a range of services, from crisis interventions for victims who are struggling to adjust to post-victimization trauma, to emergency aid for victims with immediate practical needs (e.g., new locks, shelter, clothing, food, cash), to court advocacy for victims who are overwhelmed by the complexities of the legal system (Skogan, Davis, & Lurigio, 1991).

2. Service Program Research. In a study of a small sample of crime victim programs, four major categories of victim needs were identified: crime prevention (e.g., protection from the offender); household logistical support (e.g., repairs of broken locks or doors); counseling, advice, and advocacy (e.g., psychological treatment); and property replacement (e.g., assistance with insurance claims) (Davis et al., 1999). Victims reported that family members and friends were the most common source of assistance. Approximately 4% of victims indicated that they received help from a victim service program to meet their crime prevention, logistical, or

property replacement needs. Nearly one-fourth reported that a victim service program helped with their counseling-related needs (Davis et al., 1999). The neediest victims (i.e., those with the most problems) were the most likely to receive assistance from a victim service program (cf. Friedman, Bischoff, Davis, & Person, 1982; Langton & Truman, 2014).

In the late 1990s, Safe Horizon and associates (Newmark, Bonderman, Smith, & Liner, 2003) and the Urban Institute/San Diego Association of Governments (Brickman, Davis, Rabinovich, Cantor, & Shapiro, 2002) conducted two extensive national surveys of VOCA-funded and other types of direct service programs for crime victims as well as other sources of crime victim assistance. Overseen by the National Institute of Justice and funded by OVC, these studies examined victim needs and the ways in which they were addressed through formal programming and other means (Newmark, 2004). Both surveys identified three general categories of victim needs: emotional and psychological recovery, information and advocacy, and concrete or tangible assistance (Newmark, 2004). The Urban Institute study examined VOCA-funded programs only, whereas the Safe Horizon study did not differentiate between VOCA-funded and non-VOCA-funded programs.

Among the 18 victim needs listed in the Urban Institute survey, the most common needs (expressed by 50% or more of the victims) were emotional support, service planning, and criminal justice system advocacy (Brickman et al., 2002). The Safe Horizon study reported that such needs include being listened to when upset, understanding the handling of their cases, and obtaining case information (Newmark et al., 2003). In both national surveys, victims of the most serious crimes (e.g., domestic violence, robbery, assault) reported the highest number of needs for services (Brickman et al., 2002; Newmark et al., 2003). In the Urban Institute study, victims who had participated in VOCA-funded service programs with an active outreach component

expressed more needs than those who had participated in VOCA-funded service programs with no active outreach component.

The Urban Institute study found that the VOCA-funded victim service programs addressed nearly all of victims' major needs, whereas the Safe Horizon study found that victim service programs were much less likely to address victims' needs (Brickman et al., 2002; Newmark et al., 2003). For example, victims in the Safe Horizon survey indicated that police, prosecutors, and people in the victim's personal networks were more effective than were victim service providers in listening to victims' emotional distress, helping victims understand case information, and escorting victims to doctors' offices and the courts (Newmark et al., 2003). In contrast, VOCA-funded service providers received high marks from their clients on all client satisfaction items (Brickman et al., 2002). For example, large percentages of victims indicated that victim service staff treated them fairly and respectfully, demonstrated a lot of concern for them, and tried to understand and help them. Nearly all indicated that they would refer a friend to such services.

The lack of favorable responses regarding service programs in the Safe Horizon study was explored further during site visits and in focus groups (Newmark, 2004). Researchers found that victims had often failed to access services because they were either unaware of the availability of such services or perceived themselves as being ineligible for such assistance. In some instances, the scarcity of funding required programs to allocate services to only victims of the most serious crimes. Hence, victims were unlikely to view these service programs as a useful resource (Newmark et al., 2003). Among the most common unaddressed victim needs in the Safe Horizon study were difficulty recovering their stolen property and obtaining criminal justice system advocacy, information orders of protection (Newmark, 2004).

The NCVS found that a victim services agency assisted an average of only 9% of the victims of violent crime (i.e., rape, aggravated assault, and robbery) from 2000 to 2009. Female victims of violent crime and victims of interpersonal violence as well as victims who were injured during the incident were the most likely groups to receive services. In addition, victims who reported the crime to the police were more likely to receive assistance from a victim service agency than those who did not (Langton, 2011). Underserved victims generally included young minority men, people with substance use and other mental health disorders, non-sexual assault victims, and members of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer communities (Taylor, 2014). Several other studies have reported that only a small percentage of crime victims actually access and use victim services (e.g., Davis & Henley, 1990; New & Berliner, 2000; Sims, Yost, & Abbott, 2005). Repeat victims of violent crimes (Norris et al., 1990), victims who reported crimes to the police (Zaykowski, 2014), and victims whose cases were prosecuted were more likely to use the services available (Freedly et al., 1994).

3. Compensation Programs. All 50 states (as well as the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands) currently have victim compensation programs (Doerner & Lab, 2015), which receive one-third of their funding from federal VOCA dollars; the remaining funds are generated from offender fines and fees (National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards, 2007; Newmark, 2006). Each year, these programs serve nearly 200,000 victims and their family members, allocating approximately \$450M to foster victim recovery (Doerner & Lab, 2015). Victim compensation programs vary in terms of their rationales and resources (Karmen, 2004); nonetheless, most programs contain a number of basic requirements and features, all of which are intended primarily to alleviate the financial consequences of crime (Parent, Auerbach, & Carlson, 1992).

Programs concentrate their resources on serving victims of the most serious crimes—robbery, rape, and child abuse—and their funds largely pay for these victims’ medical bills (Newmark, 2006). Property crime victims are ineligible for compensation. When victims have received compensation from private insurance companies and government entitlement programs, such as Medicaid, programs deduct that amount from final compensation awards and usually set the maximum award allotted to crime victims at \$25,000 (Karmen, 2004; National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards, 2007). However, state residency is not a requirement for compensation; for example, a resident of Kansas who is victimized in Florida can apply for compensation from Florida’s program.

To be eligible for compensation, victims are required to report the crime promptly and cooperate with the police officials in the apprehension and criminal prosecution of the offender (Newmark, 2006). Victim compensation programs also typically award dollars only to “innocent” crime victims; that is, any evidence of victim precipitation or “contributing misconduct” precludes a victim from receiving compensation. For example, in Illinois (similar to many other states), the criteria include the following stipulation: “The victim must not have contributed to his/her injury by engaging in a wrongful act, being the offender or accomplice of the offender, or substantially provoking the incident” (Office of the Attorney General, State of Illinois, 2014). Similarly, the Wisconsin State Statute specifies that no award may be ordered if the victim “engaged in conduct, which substantially contributed to the infliction of the victim's injury or death or in which the victim could have reasonably foreseen could lead to the injury or death or committed a crime which caused or contributed to the victim's injury or death” (Wisconsin State Statute, Chapter 948).

According to the NCVC (2014), most states include “victim innocence” as a requirement for a state compensation award. Nonetheless, determinations of “victim innocence” are fraught with all the problems discussed earlier in this paper regarding attributions of victim responsibility for violent attacks (see above). Hence, the feasibility, validity, and fairness of applying the criterion of “victim innocence” as a prerequisite to grant victim compensation should be seriously questioned. The conviction of an offender and identification of a victim in a case should be the primary basis for considering an award. To do otherwise is to incorporate an element of victim blaming in a program designed to serve victims’ needs and hasten their recovery.

Through the long-standing efforts of victim advocates and service providers as well as public officials and state legislators, the criminal justice system appears to be more attentive to victims’ needs for services and support and less likely to subject them to a “secondary victimization” experience in which “victims were often harmed as much by the system’s response as by the crime itself” (Derene, Walker, & Stein, 2007, p. 17). The confluences of programming, legislation, and increased awareness about the plight of violent crime victims have created more opportunities for fostering victim recovery and overcoming the stigma of victimization (Howley & Dorris, 2013).

VII. Improvements in the Measurement of Violent Victimization

The measurement of violent victimization has improved steadily in its methodological preciseness and sophistication. Attempts to sharpen existing tools and add new approaches for capturing the most serious crimes must persist for the sake of theory development, knowledge expansion, and service improvement. The collection of better data will result in better understanding of the causes and extent of violent victimization, as well as the formulation of

strategies for its prevention: primary (eradicate the causes of violence at the individual and community level); secondary (identify those at risk of violence and victimization and intervene before episodes erupt); and tertiary (minimize harm to the survivors of violence through services and programs).

A. Incidence, Victimations, Prevalence, and Concentration

The annual counting of crimes and victimizations remains a critical recordkeeping enterprise that should continue at the local, state, and federal levels. The collection and reporting of these data could be enriched by adding five different but highly related elements to the accounting and analytic process. The first is the differentiation among incidents (number of individual crimes and victimizations/number of persons in the specified population), prevalence (number of victims/number of persons in the specified population), and concentration (number of victimizations/number of victims) (Lauritsen & Rezey, 2013). Counting a single incident with several victims as “one crime” is a misrepresentation of the impact of crime and has been allegedly employed to manipulate crime statistics for falsely enhancing police performance (Conklin, 2003). Counting victimizations alone masks the fact that victimization risk varies by person, place, and time factors. Identifying concentrations of victims would greatly foster our ability to prevent occurrences and to respond more effectively to the victims of violent crime.

B. Victimization Risk

The second element is an exploration of victim risk, which increases with each episode of crime committed against a person. For example, studies of victims of sexual assault show the cumulative risk of repeat victimizations (Daigle & Fischer, 2013). In addition, studies demonstrate that social and economic variables interact with demographic characteristics to affect the likelihood of victimization. This research has implications for crime prevention

practices and helps explicate the victim-related factors that contribute to the varying likelihood of victimization at different ages and in different settings and circumstances (Clark & Cornish, 1985).

More research attention should be focused on the phenomenon of repeat or repetitive victimization, also known as “series victimizations,” which the NCVS defines as “six or more similar but separate crimes [that] the victim is unable to recall individually or describe in detail to an interviewer” (BJS, 2003, p. 5). Other definitions of repeat victimization include “two or more incidents of the same type of victimization within a short time frame (e.g., a few days, weeks, or months or within a year)” (Daigle & Fisher, 2013, p. 372). Beyond the same individual being victimized again, virtual repeat victimization can involve a similar person, item, or place targeted by the same offender (Farrell, 2010); whereas near repeat victimization can involve a neighbor who is victimized in the same manner as the initial victim (Johnson & Bowers, 2005).

As noted above, adding prevalence and concentration analyses to crime data reports will help illuminate the phenomenon of repetitive victimizations and is crucial in gaining an appreciation of these types of crimes (Lauritsen & Rezey, 2013). Data from the International Crime Victims Survey suggest that several crimes are likely to have been instances of repeat victimization, striking the same victim in reoccurring episodes. For example, 46% of sexual assaults, 41% of other types of assault, and 27% of robberies are incidents of repeat crimes (Weisel, 2005). Similar data from the British Crime Survey indicate that 2% of victims account for 41% of property crimes, while 1% of victims account for 59% of personal crimes (Johnson & Bowers, 2005).

More specific and parsimonious explorations of risk could simply involve measuring the relationships between the risk of violent criminal victimization and demographic characteristics

(see above) (Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2010). However, most needed are in-depth analyses (through the application of advanced statistical techniques) that examine the complex inter-relationships among the risk factors for both victimization and offending, and how they interact and change over time and place.

An explication of crime and victimization trends also will emerge from analyses of disaggregated national crime data. Drilling down more deeply into the criminal victimization data within and among subgroups defined by race, ethnicity, income, and census tract will help clarify the variability of victimization rates across places and times; these rates are hidden in the aggregate data sets but apparent in such fine-grained analyses (Lauritsen & Heimer, 2010). Furthermore, asking victims to elaborate on the question of “why were you victimized” (Addington, 2008) would lead to more victim-centered theories of violent victimization, which could include qualitative descriptions of violent victimizations, as well as to reports of victim intent and motivation in different instances of violent crime (Cantor & Lynch, 2000).

C. Social Structure or Place Analyses

The third element is the exertion of more emphasis on the ecology of victimization. Various types of crime clusters can form so-called “hot areas” or “hot spots.” The underlying premise of a “routine activities theory of context and place” is that such locations emerge and evolve because various social contexts have different characteristics related to opportunity and guardianship or social control. For example, neighborhoods differ in terms of their proximity to areas of high offender and gang concentrations, as well as in terms of their accessibility to offenders. Different places also contain a greater or lesser supply of attractive targets and provide a better or worse overall level of security or potential for surveillance or guardianship. More targets and less guardianship attract more opportunities for crime and violence. Hence, the rates

of victimization within these areas are likely to be higher, which was noted in the preceding discussion of social disorganization theory. In terms of violent crimes in particular, offender and victimization patterns certainly covary (Papachristos et al., 2012).

D. Cost Estimates

The fourth element is a broader calculation of the costs of violent victimization. As suggested earlier, future measures of the costs of violent crime must move beyond a simple count of incidents and a cost account of the direct losses incurred from medical and funeral expenses. Other economic burdens of violent crime consist of direct crime avoidance costs, second-order avoidance costs, residuals of fear, social hostility, and costs of law enforcement (Kleiman et al., 2014). Examples of such costs could include residents' purchases of handguns for self-protection (direct crime avoidance costs); convenience store closures to avoid armed robberies, resulting in a loss of local jobs and tax revenue (second-order avoidance costs); a spate of shootings leading to the distrust of neighbors and avoidance of social gatherings or events, weakening social bonds and rendering a neighborhood more susceptible to violence (social hostility); and the expenditures of overtime pay for police officers dispatched to patrol violence-plagued streets (costs of law enforcement). The "pain and suffering" of violent crime victims (emotional burden) also needs to be captured with greater precision in future cost analyses (McCollister et al., 2010).

E. Victim Service Program Effectiveness

The fifth element is the collection of data relating to the effectiveness of victim service programs. Few rigorous studies of victim assistance agencies have ever been conducted (Taylor, 2014). Most investigations have employed small sample sizes and focused on female victims of sexual assault. In addition, the basic characteristics of victim service agencies have never been systematically or widely examined, leaving numerous questions unanswered, such as who is

being served, where are the major gaps in services, how are programs being funded, and what are the costs of such programs (NCVC, 2011; Taylor, 2014).

In conclusion, varying criminal victimization trends at the macro level are multifactorial and defy easy explanation. The nearly three-decade decline in crime has been consistent and substantial but has yet to be fully expounded. A long view clearly demonstrates the highly variable and possibly cyclical nature of victimization. Like social and economic indicators of every sort, crime statistics are inherently—and often inexplicably—variable and unpredictable. With respect to violent victimization, annual statistics have fluctuated around each decade's central tendencies, which have steadily declined, as exemplified in this paper's discussion of violent crime and victimization rates.

Notwithstanding these data, declarations of returning to the safety of the 1960s are largely premature and simply inaccurate. The overall violent victimization rate in the 2000s (474.93 per 100,00 residents) was nearly 2.5 times higher than the rate in the 1960s (197.24 per 100,000 residents) and slightly higher than the rate in the 1970s (451.72 per 100,000 residents). Moreover, the violent victimization rate in the United States continues to exceed that of every post-industrial country in the world (e.g., Japan, Germany, United Kingdom, South Korea, France, Italy) (Van Dijk, Van Kesteren & Smit, 2008). Accordingly, violence persists as a major threat to the health and well-being of the residents and the economic viability of this country. Vigilant tracking of the targets and costs of violent crime is an important component in devising strategies to prevent cyclical upturns in the number and rate of violent victimization.

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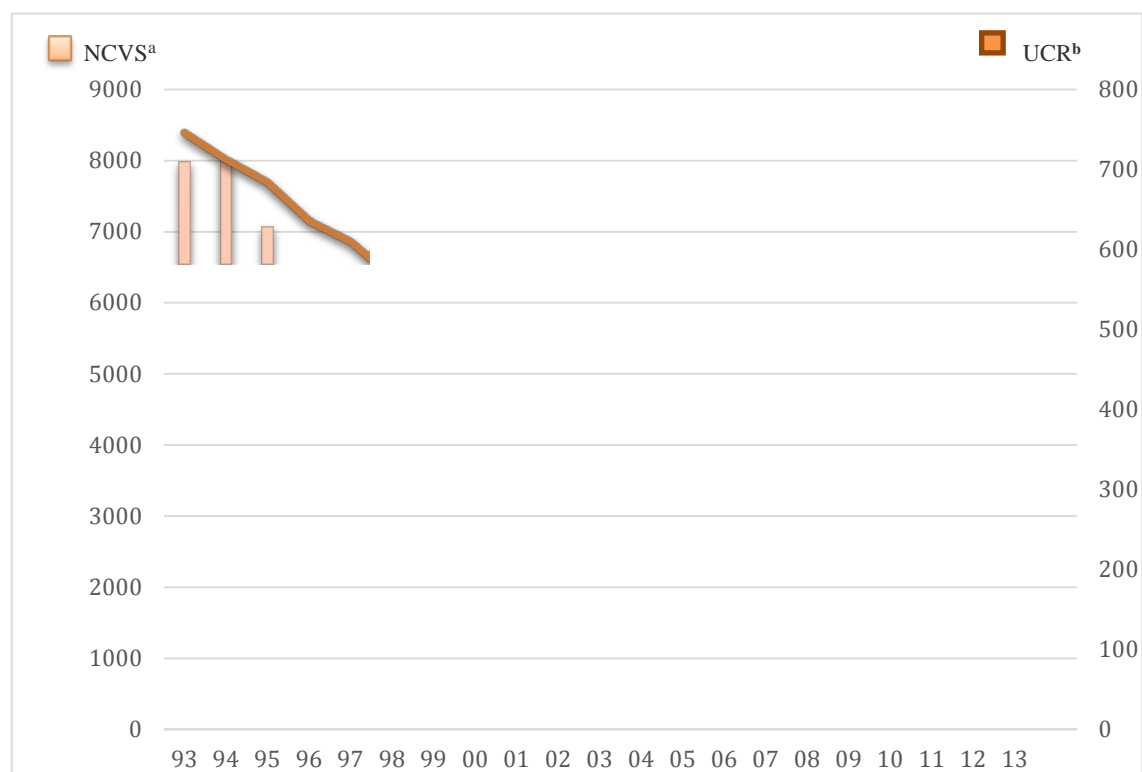
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Appendix**Figure 1: Violent Crime Victimization Rate (per 100,000) 1993–2013**

^a Source adapted from: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *National Crime Victimization Survey, 1993–2013*

^b Source: *US Crime Rates per 100,000 1960-2013*

Table 1: Violent Crime Victimization Rate (per 100,000) 1993–2013

NCVS ^a		UCR ^b	
1993	7980	1993	747
1994	8000	1994	713
1995	7070	1995	685
1996	6470	1996	637
1997	6110	1997	611
1998	5410	1998	566
1999	4720	1999	523
2000	3750	2000	507
2001	3260	2001	505
2002	3210	2002	494
2003	3210	2003	476
2004	2780	2004	463
2005	2840	2005	470
2006	3410	2006	474
2007	2720	2007	467
2008	2530	2008	458
2009	2230	2009	432
2010	1930	2010	405
2011	2260	2011	387
2012	2610	2012	388
2013	2320	2013	368

^a Source adapted from: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *National Crime Victimization Survey, 1993–2013*

^b Source: *US Crime Rates per 100,000 1960–2013*